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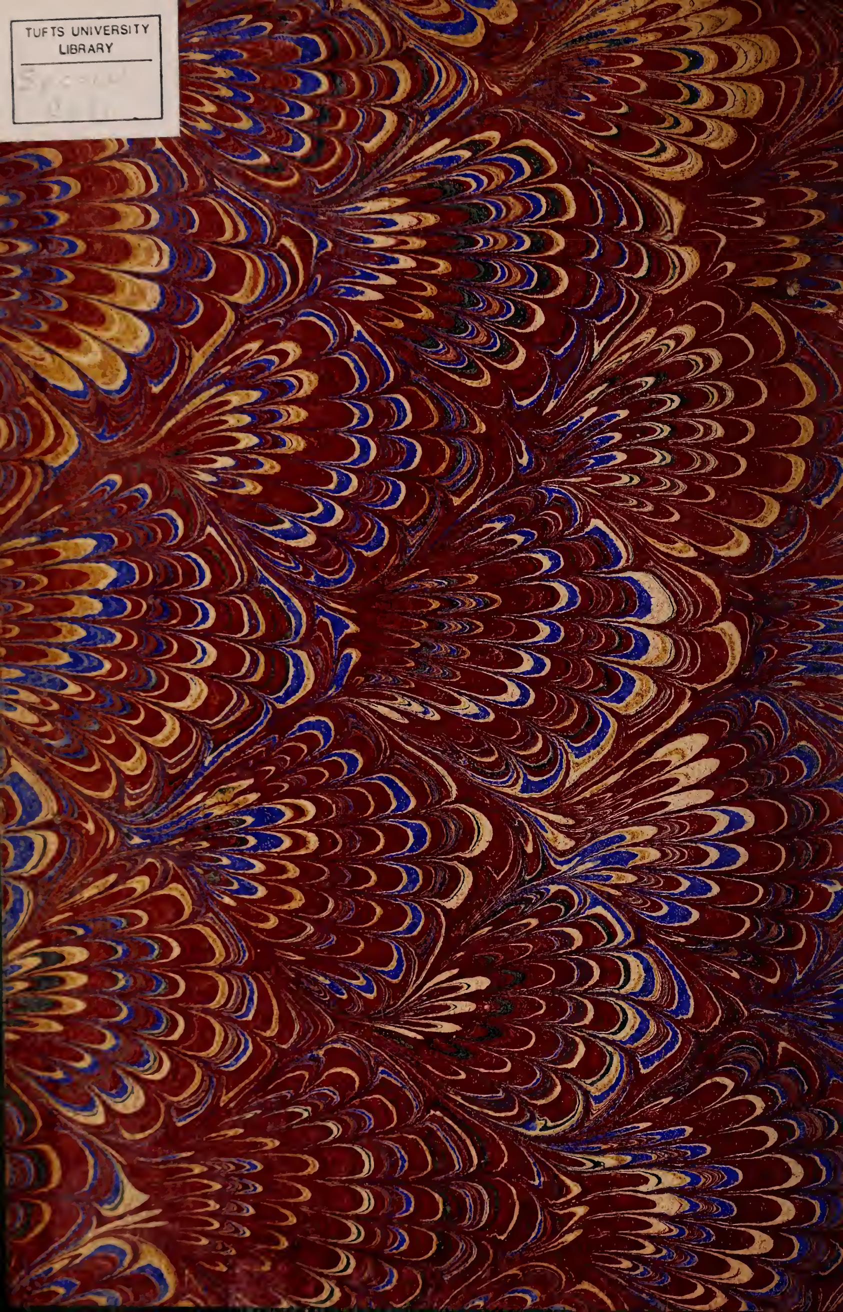

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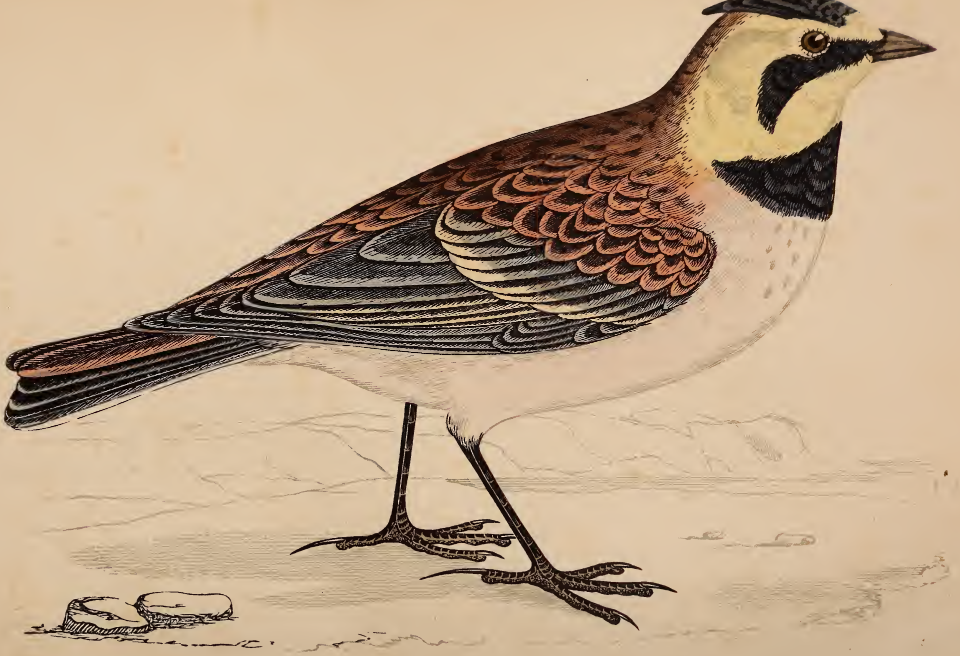

SHORE LARK.

# A
# HISTORY
# OF
# BRITISH BIRDS.

BY

rancis rpen

THE REV. F. O. MORRIS, B.A.,

MEMBER OF THE ASHMOLEAN SOCIETY.

VOL. III.

CONTAINING FORTY-THREE COLOURED ENGRAVINGS.

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'*Gloria in excelsis Deo.*'

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LONDON:
GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS, 5, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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# THE THIRD VOLUME.

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# HISTORY OF BRITISH BIRDS.

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## SHORE LARK.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Alauda alpestris,* | JENYNS. GOULD. EYTON. |
| " *cornuta,* | RICHARDSON AND SWAINSON. |

*Alauda*—A Lark. *Alpestris*—...........?

THIS species is a native of the northern parts of Europe, Asia, and America, being found in the most abundance in the last-named continent. It is also said to occur at the southern extremity of South America, on those stony shores which have perpetuated the name of the enterprising Magellan; and, if it be so, on others doubtless in all that part of the world as well. According to Temminck, it is found commonly in Saxony, Germany, and Holland, both in winter and summer, and breeds in the latter.

The instances of the occurrence of the Shore Lark in this country are but very few. One, a male in immature plumage, was shot on the beach at Sherringham, in the county of Norfolk, in March, 1830. A second has been recorded by Thomas Eyton, Esq., as having been killed in Lincolnshire; and Mr. Yarrell mentions two which were obtained on a Down in Kent. 'Two and two make four.'

In severe weather these birds move towards the warmer climates of the south or the north, according as they have been localized north or south of the equator. They move thus in the beginning of September, flying in straggling numbers, hardly to be called flocks, and at but a low elevation above the water, having previously collected together in small parties of forty or fifty, the members of different families. In the beginning of June they again retrace their steps, or rather their flight, to their native land, the inhospitable climes of the frozen north; few, however, wander to the very extremest polar regions.

The Shore Lark is rather shy in its habits, but, when engaged with its young, sits very close, either through a temporary change of disposition, or from anxiety for its brood, as if conscious of the protection which nature has afforded to it in the assimilation of the colour of its plumage to that of the scanty verdure alone to be found where it has its dwelling. Should, however, danger seem to approach too closely, the anxious mother flutters away from any chance intruder, feigning lameness so cunningly, that none but one accustomed to the sight could refrain from pursuit. Her partner immediately joins her in mimic wretchedness, uttering a soft and plaintive note. It would appear that these birds may be kept in confinement.

Its food consists of the buds, blossoms, and seeds of the stunted vegetation of the Arctic regions, and such insects as may there be also found. Flies it expertly chases on the wing; and at times it betakes itself to the sea-shore, to search for minute shell-fish or crustacea.

The male bird sings sweetly while on the wing, although its song is comparatively short. It rises from the moss, or the bare rock, in a short oblique flight of a few yards, begins and ends its madrigal, performs a few irregular evolutions, and returns to the ground. There also it sings, but less frequently, and with less fullness. It has at times a ventriloquistic power, which makes its note seem like that of another species. When the young are hatched, the music, for the most part, ceases—the 'cares of a family' are felt by the feathered as well as by the human species. 'There is a time for all things,' says the wise man; 'a time to weep, and a time to laugh.'

In the desolate and sterile tracts which extend in the high latitudes from the sea-shore to regions, if possible, still more savagely wild and barren, the whole face of the country is described as one boundless succession of hoary granite rock, covered with mosses and lichens, varying in size and hue—some green, others as white as snow, and others of divers colours of every tint, and growing in large tufts and patches. Here the Shore Lark builds, and rears her young.

The nest, which is composed of fine grasses, circularly disposed, and lined with feathers, exactly resembles in colour the moss in which it is embedded, and is placed on the ground, in the desolate regions where moss is almost the only vegetation.

The eggs are four or five in number, greyish white, spotted with pale blue and brown spots. They are laid in the beginning of July.

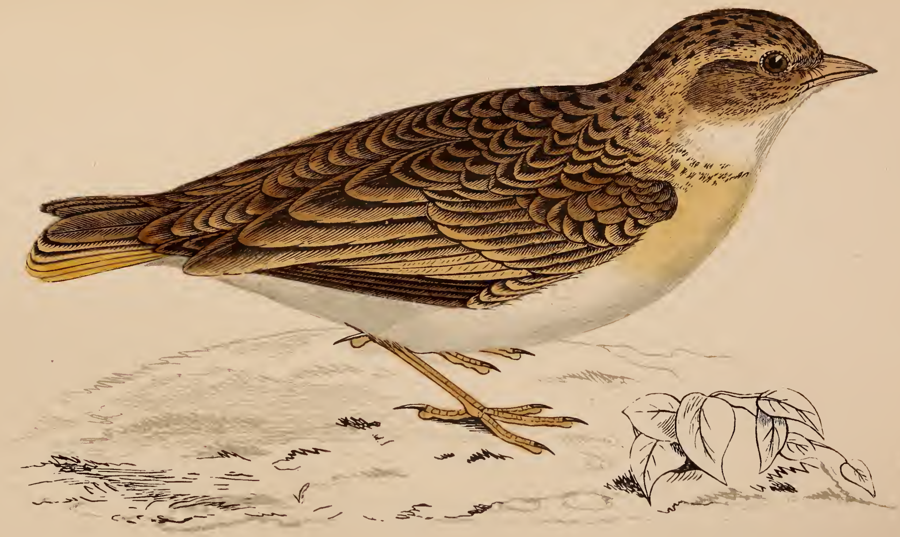
The young, says Mr. Audubon, which are hatched about the middle of July, and fully fledged by the 1st. of August, leave the nest before they are able to fly, and follow their parents over the moss, in which they drop and endeavour to conceal themselves on the appearance of any danger. They run nimbly, and are fed for about a week. If observed and pursued, the same author further relates, that they utter a soft 'peep,' open their wings to aid them in their escape, and separating, make off with great celerity. On such occasions it is difficult to secure more than one of them, unless several persons be present, when each can overtake a bird. The parents all this time are following the enemy overhead, lamenting the danger to which their young are exposed.

Male; length, about seven inches; bill, bluish horn-colour, almost black at the tip: a black streak passes from its base to the eye, and spreads out behind it. Iris, dark brown, over it is a yellow streak: some bristly feathers cover the nostrils. Forehead, yellow, greenish ash-colour after the autumnal moult; head on the sides, and between the bill and eye, black; on the front of the crown there is a broad transverse black band, which ends on each side with a few long and pointed black feathers, which the bird elevates at pleasure; the back of the head, black, which turns to dusky brown in the winter, and is mixed with the yellow feathers at the edges; crown, greyish brown. Neck on the back, greyish brown tinged with red; nape, greyish brown, the central part of the feathers being darker than the edges; chin, throat, and sides of the neck, fine pale yellow, white in summer. Breast above, the same, with a gorget of black across the upper part of it, which fades to dusky brown in the winter; below, it is dull white, and tinged with a reddish brown on the sides; back, brown, the centre of each feather being darker than the edges; in summer it becomes light brownish red, and has a tinge of purple: after the autumnal moult it is imbued with grey.

The wings, which extend to within three quarters of an inch of the end of the tail, have the first three quill feathers very nearly equal in length, and the longest in the wing; the second rather the longest, the first being a little longer than the third, the fourth a quarter of an inch shorter than the third; greater wing coverts, dark brown with light brown margins, broadest and most distinct after the moult; lesser wing coverts, dark brown tinged with red, and tipped with white, most so after the moult; primaries, dusky brown, with very narrow light-coloured edges, widest after the moult; secondaries, brown; tertiaries, brown, some with light brown, and some with whitish margins, widest after the moult. Tail, black, except on part of the edge of the outer web of the outside feather on each side, which is white; the two middle feathers are dark brown, with light brown margins; upper tail coverts, brown, the central part of the feathers darker than the edges; under tail coverts, dull white. Legs, toes, and claws, bluish black; the hind claw straight, and longer than the toe.

The female is a little smaller than the male, being about six inches and a half in length, and her colours duller; the streak over the eye pale yellow. Head on the crown, neck on the back, and nape, of the same colour as the back, the black changing into brown and greyish. The breast has only a narrow brownish black band, fringed with yellow on its upper part; back, with more grey than in the male, with the shafts of the feathers darker, and with hardly any of the red tint.

The young males after their first autumnal moult resemble the adult female.



SHORT-TOED LARK.

# SHORT-TOED LARK.

*Alauda brachydactyla,* GOULD.

*Alauda*—A Lark. *Brachydactyla.* *Brachus*—Short. *Dactylos*—A finger.

I SHOULD be glad if the proverb that 'least said is soonest mended' applied to the case of a bird of whose Natural History one knows but little; but small as the present amount of my information about the Short-toed Lark is, I have no present prospect of increasing it.

This species is common in the southern parts of Europe—in Sicily, France, and Spain, and is also found in Germany. It occurs in fact along all the shores of the Mediterranean, both in Africa and in Asia.

One was caught in a net near Shrewsbury, in Shropshire, on the 25th. of October, 1841.

The food of this bird consists of insects and seeds.

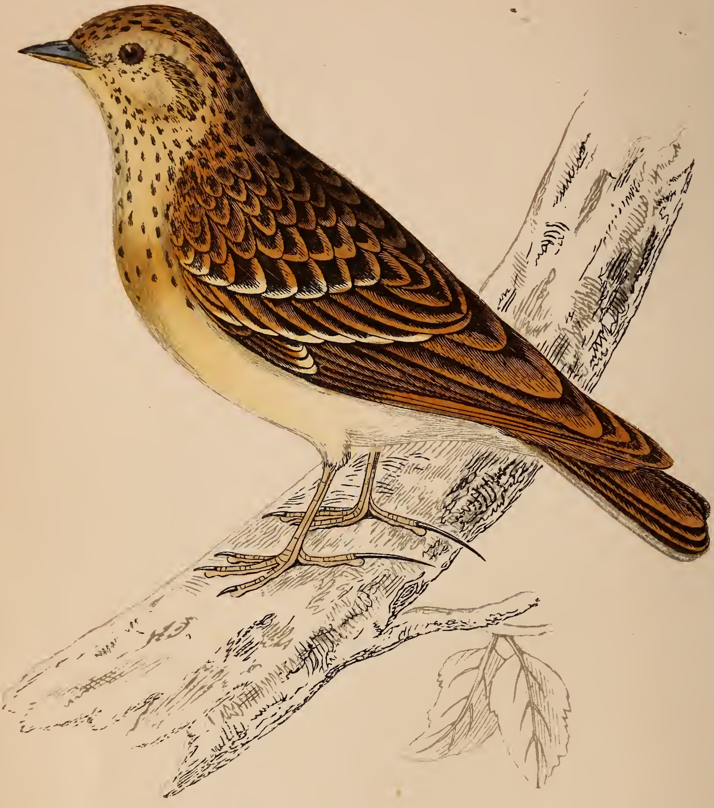
The nest is placed on the ground.

The eggs are four or five in number, and of a dull yellow colour.

Male; length, five inches and three quarters; bill, light brown. There is a yellowish white streak over the eye. Head on the crown, neck on the back, and nape, yellowish brown, with the centre of each feather darker than the rest; chin, throat, and breast, white, the latter tinged on the middle and the sides with yellowish brown; back, yellowish brown, the centre of each feather being darker than the edges. The second quill feather is the longest, the first and third a little shorter; primaries and secondaries, dusky brown. The tertiaries extend as far as the end of the closed wing. Tail, dusky brown, the two outer feathers white on their outer edge. Legs, toes, and claws, which are short, light brown.

The female resembles the male, but her plumage is more dull in colour.

The young, during the first autumn, have the outer edges of each feather margined with buff.



WOOD LARK.

# WOOD LARK.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Alauda arborea,* | PENNANT. MONTAGU. BEWICK. |
| " *nemorosa,* | GMELIN. |
| " *cristatella,* | LATHAM. |

*Alauda*—A Lark. *Arborea*—Of, or pertaining to trees.

THE Wood Lark is found in Europe—in Germany, France, Holland, Italy, Crete, Corfu, and other countries of the south of this continent, where it is a resident throughout the year; and also in Denmark, Russia, and Sweden, but only as a summer visitant. It occurs also in Asia Minor.

In this country it is met with in Yorkshire, pretty frequently in the neighbourhood of York, but farther north than that city it becomes rare; Sussex, Hampshire, Dorsetshire, Somersetshire, Devonshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Lancashire, and, though but sparingly, in Cornwall, and Northumberland. It is not a common bird; I have never obtained but one, namely, at Langmoor, near Charmouth, Dorsetshire, many years ago.

In Ireland, it is known in the counties of Antrim and Down, and no doubt in others too; but there also it is uncommon.

Mr. Thomas Edwards has informed me of his having found this bird so far north as Banff; and Mr. Heysham has related that it is occasionally taken near Dumfries.

In the Orkney Islands it appears to be unknown, for it is not recorded in the 'Natural History of Orkney,' published by Dr. Baikie and Mr. Heddle. Meyer says that in Shetland it is hardly known.

Cultivated districts are the resort of the Wood Lark, as its name implies; it prefers the rich parts of the country where hedge-row timber abounds, the great ornament of the English landscape.

It remains with us throughout the year.

In hard weather a few collect together, but for the most part only the members of the original family, six or seven in all. They are easily tamed, and become exceedingly familiar, even answering, when called to, with a few liquid notes. They seem to roost at night both on the ground and in trees.

The Wood Lark commences its flight from the ground, a bush, or the top of a tree, with a short straight progress, which it then begins to change for an upward spiral one, gradually enlarging the area of each circle as it ascends. When the summit, so to speak, is gained, it sometimes floats about in a similar manner; and at others, after hovering about, descends again as it rose, in circles; often with wings stretched out, and seemingly motionless; and when it again reaches the earth, it runs a few steps along the ground. Mr. Selby says that it occasionally remains an hour on the wing, and Bechstein even several hours. On the ground they walk in rather a slow manner.

Its food consists of insects, which it sometimes chases like the Flycatcher, but mostly seeks upon the ground, where it also meets with caterpillars and worms. It also, at times, when the snow shuts up the sources of its usual supplies, eats small seeds, grain, and green herbage.

Its note is very rich, and rather of a plaintive cast, and is prolonged, it is said, during the warm nights of summer. It has been heard even in the months of January and December, and is regularly commenced in March and April, if the weather be fine. It is uttered both when the musician is perched upon the branch of a tree, or when wheeling and hovering in the air in the manner already described, as is its wont:—

> 'High in the air and poised upon its wings,
> Unseen, the soft enamoured Wood Lark sings.'

Selby and Montagu say that it is sometimes heard, though but rarely, from the ground.

Early in March these birds pair, and commence building their nests about the middle of the month, if the season be favourable.

The nest is placed upon the ground, beneath some low bush or tuft of grass, or at the foot of a tree; occasionally under the shelter of a fence or paling, or on a bank; one has been known on the trunk of a fallen oak, on the topmost bough of which, perhaps, in previous years when it still stood in all its pride, the bird had warbled forth her strains, and now when levelled with the earth, she 'could not bid the spot adieu,' but sang a daily requiem over the fallen remains. The outside materials are small roots, grass, and sometimes moss, and the lining smaller grasses, with occasionally a little hair.

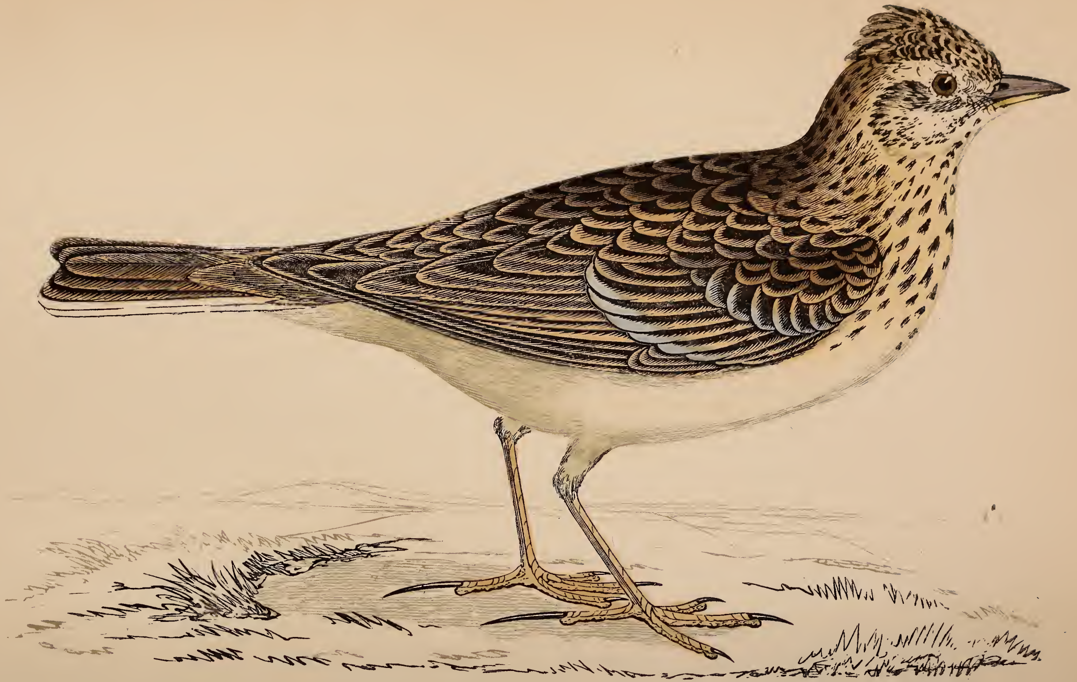
The eggs, which are laid at the end of March or beginning of April, and also in July, there seeming to be two broods in the year, are four or five in number, of a pale reddish white, or yellowish brown ground colour, spotted and speckled with dull reddish brown, or dark grey, or brownish grey, with sometimes a few irregular dusky lines at the larger end.

Male; weight, about eight drachms; length, a little more than six inches; bill, dark brown on the upper part, the lower one and the base of the upper one, pale yellowish brown, iris, dark brown: over it is a pale brown or yellowish white streak. The feathers about the base of the bill are bristly at the tips; a sort of crest is formed by the feathers on the top of the head, which are of a light brown colour, streaked with dark brown; neck on the back, yellowish brown, on the sides, reddish; nape, brown, streaked with dark brownish black; chin and throat, pale yellowish brown, with a reddish tinge; breast, pale yellowish brown, with a few small streaked spots of dark brown on the middle part; back, light reddish brown on the upper part, brown on the lower, dashed with dark brownish black near the tips of the feathers.

The wings expand to the width of one foot and half an inch, and extend to within rather less than an inch of the end of the tail; the first feather is very short, the second not quite so long as the third or the fourth, which latter is the longest in the wing; the fifth nearly as long as the second: Yarrell gives the third as the longest. Greater wing coverts, dark brown, tipped with pale brown; lesser wing coverts, dark brown, some of them tipped with pale brown, both making two rather conspicuous bands across the wings; primaries and secondaries, dusky brown, edged and tipped with light reddish brown; tertiaries, dark brown, edged with light brown. The tail, which is short, of twelve feathers, square at the tip, has the outer feather on each side pale brown, brownish white at the tip, with a dark brown patch on the inner side; the two middle feathers are pale brown, broadly edged with reddish brown, and the remaining eight brownish black, with an angular spot of white at the tip; upper tail coverts, brown; under tail coverts, pale yellowish brown. Legs and toes, light brown; claws, light yellowish brown, the hind claw straight, and half as long again as the hind toe.

The female strongly resembles the male, but is rather smaller in size; the dark markings are larger, and there is less of the yellow shade on the breast.

The young have the front and sides of the neck marked with angular dusky spots, part of the breast tinged with yellowish red, and the back yellowish brown, the feathers having a band of dusky-colour and light edges.



SKY LARK.

# SKY LARK.

## LAVROCK. FIELD LARK.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Alauda arvensis,* | PENNANT. MONTAGU. |
| " *vulgaris,* | WILLUGHBY. RAY. |

*Alauda*—A Lark. *Arvensis*—Of, or appertaining to fields.

THIS universal favourite is a native of the whole of the continent of Europe, but appears to be unknown in Iceland, Greenland, or the Ferroe Islands. The greater part of those which are seen in Russia, Siberia, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, in the summer, leave for the more genial climate of Greece and Italy, before the wintry blasts begin to sweep over the lands of the frozen north: it is also known in Asia Minor, and other parts of the Asiatic continent, and in the northern parts of Africa.

In this country it is very abundant from north to south.

The Lark is to be found in all situations, but particularly, in the winter half of the year, in ploughed or stubble fields, especially, in the latter case, when they are sown with clover seeds.

In the 'British Song Birds,' a doubt is expressed as to whether the Lark almost entirely quits the north for the south in the winter; but I can only say that there are hundreds to be seen in Yorkshire in almost every large field, even in the severest weather; the same large flocks into which they have begun to collect towards the end of autumn. Even in the Orkney, and no doubt therefore in the Shetland Islands too, they do not seem to quit for more southern regions, on the approach of winter, unless it be in, or rather before, some unusually severe weather, when they move southwards in numerous bodies. In some seasons they continue together until a comparatively late period. As many as sixty have been seen in a flock on the 24th. of March: this was the case in the year 1838.

It would appear that many visit us at that season from the continent, and in the south of England they are, at such times, seen to move in a westerly direction. They also cross from Scotland to Ireland.

Larks are thoroughly terrestrial in their habits; it is but rarely that they alight on a tree, even a low bush, a wall, or a hedge; though I have several times seen them do so. They pass the day, except when soaring, and roost at night, upon the ground. They are sprightly in all their motions, and if anything like danger be observed or suspected, they may be seen frequently stopping to look round, raising themselves up, and elevating the feathers of the head as a crest; or else crouching down, and hiding themselves as much as they can, which the assimilation of their colour to that of the places they frequent, renders easy: ordinarily, on the ground, they move rather quickly about in a running manner, now quicker, and now more slow: they often lie very close till you almost walk up to them. They may be frequently seen dusting themselves in the roads, and at other times they seem to be fond of settling themselves in such places. This very day, on which I have written the foregoing, the 3rd. of March, I disturbed a pair, which rose up from the middle of the road on which I was walking; and on coming back an hour or two afterwards, I found that they had returned, and they rose again from the same place: there was not a particle of the 'March dust,' 'a peck' of which is said to be 'worth a king's ransom;' but the traces of frost and snow were still remaining.

These birds, like so many others, shew a great attachment to their young. In 'The Naturalist,' old series, Mr. Edward Blyth mentions that a mower having accidentally cut off with a scythe the upper part of a nest, without injuring the sitting bird, she did not fly away; and it was discovered about an hour afterwards that she had, in the interval, constructed a dome of dry grass over the nest. Instances are on record in which they have removed their eggs as a precautionary means of preservation; and Mr. Jesse records, in his 'Gleanings in Natural History,' that a clergyman's attention being drawn, as he was walking, by the cry of a bird, he discovered a pair of Larks rising out of an adjoining stubble field and then crossing over the road on which he was, one of them having a young bird in its claws, which was dropped in the opposite field, at a height of about thirty feet from the ground, and killed by the fall. The affectionate parent was endeavouring to convey its young one to a place of safety, but her strength failed in the attempt. The long hind claws seem well adapted for this feat.

The Lark seems to have, occasionally at least, kindly feelings even towards the young of another species. One of these birds, which had been taken from the nest when very young, and brought up in a cage, was turned out when it was able to fly, and some young Goldfinches put into its place. The Lark returned to her former abode, and was again put into the cage with the Goldfinches. They were weak and feeble, and she not only brooded over them, but fed them. Others have been known to continue to feed their young when captured with them, apparently unobservant of the change, and Mr. Weir has written of one, a male bird, which, while in confinement, acted the part of a faithful step-father, having brought up a number of his own species, and likewise several broods of Linnets, and, what was still more curious, one which was only a few weeks old assisted him most assiduously in giving food to a family of young birds.

In the wild state, if on the nest, the hen bird will either crouch close, in the hope, very often realized, of escaping detection, or, if disturbed, will fly off to a short distance, in anxious distress, in a low cowering manner, or hover about a little way overhead, uttering a note of alarm, which soon brings up the male. Larks are very good eating, and countless thousands are taken for the table, but still their numbers never seem to decrease.

As to the flight of the Lark, it is indeed a 'lofty' one, continued upwards, higher and higher as the spring advances and the sun, towards whom he soars, gets higher in the heavens; up, and up, into the very highest regions of the air, so that the eye is literally oftentimes unable to follow it; but if you watch long enough, you will again perceive the vocalist, and downwards in measured cadence, both of song and descent, but rather more rapidly than he went up, he will stoop; nearer and nearer he will come, until at last, suspended for a moment over the spot which contains his treasures, for whose delight perhaps he has been warbling all the while his loudest and sweetest notes, and has kept them all along in his sight, slanting at the end for a greater or less distance, probably as danger may or may not appear to be nigh, he drops with half-closed and unmoved wings—and is at home.

> 'A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there,
> Which, search where you will, you'll ne'er meet with elsewhere.

This flight frequently occupies nearly ten minutes; sometimes, it is said, as much as an hour, during which time both throat and wings seem taxed to the utmost, but yet apparently without fatigue of either, even though the loftiest regions of the 'thin air' have been ascended to and traversed.

In rising up, the Lark turns towards the wind, if any be blowing; but this is only what might naturally be expected; and in settling down, the tail is seen to be expanded. At first rising, the flight is fluttering and irregular, then a few reaches forward are made, upwards or in a slanting direction, and then in curves, or parts of circles, the bird ascends, and when at a high elevation wheels in circles, singing all the while. In the winter season, when an upward soaring is scarcely attempted, the flight is slightly undulated, performed by a few flappings of the wings and then a further progress, either in the way of a short hovering about or a wheeling here and there, before the ground is again settled on, which it is rather abruptly at the close.

Their food consists of grain, grasses, and seeds, and also of insects, caterpillars, snails, and worms; and they may often be seen running into little pools of water, probably in search of any insects that may happen to be there. In quest of these they have also been seen running along the top of a hedge. The Lark uses a quantity of sand and gravel with its food.

The note of the Sky Lark, so rich and clear, full and varied, is universally appreciated, so that one may surely say 'where is the man with soul so dead,' who, when on some clear bright day in early spring, when all nature is full of hope, and in the blue sky above scarce a cloud is to be seen he for the first time that year hears the well-known carol, can help turning his eyes upwards to detect the songster, and follow the happy bird, to trace, till he can no longer follow it, save faintly with his ear, in its aerial ascent, step by step, as it were, in the 'open firmament of Heaven,' one of the 'fowls that may fly' there, by the permission given to them from the Great Creator when they were first called into existence? I think it is old Izaak Walton who says 'O God! what happiness must Thou have prepared for Thy saints in Heaven, when Thou hast provided bad men with such enjoyments upon earth!' In descending, too, the same clear note is still heard, and it is sometimes continued again after the bird has alighted on the ground, and is occasionally uttered by it when perched on a bush, and sometimes when hovering over a field at but a little height. It has been heard long after sunset, even when the night had become quite dark. If you have a Lark in a cage, give him his liberty, and make him happy.

And not only is the song of the Sky Lark thus beautiful, but it is abundantly bestowed upon us. It is to be heard throughout three quarters of the year, nay, one may almost say, in some degree, throughout the year, for in the beginning of January in the present year, I think I heard, as others have before, an attempt at it. Mr. Macgillivray has heard the full song in Fifeshire, an appropriate locality, on the 13th. of February, and again on the 12th. of March, 1835. It is also uttered on the ground, from the top of a clod, or even in the concealment of the grass, as well as in the air, though not so much so in the former case. It is commenced as early as half-past one and two o'clock in the morning, and is continued at intervals till after the sun has again gone down. The female sings as well as the male. In the winter a faint chirp is the ordinary note.

When 'April showers' begin to give promise of returning spring, or even earlier, in the beginning of March, as I have myself seen them, and in February, the Larks begin to separate from their companions of the winter months, with whom since the autumn they have associated in large straggling flocks, and form their 're-unions,' of a very different nature to those of the fashionable world. In the one there is that, of which in the other there is none; and this, as Aristotle says, makes 'not a little but the whole difference.' Two broods are frequently reared in the year, the first of which is fledged by the middle or end of June, or even the middle of May, the eggs being laid the end of April or beginning of May; and the second in August, the eggs being laid in June or July. In confinement, three and even four sets of eggs have been known to be laid. Mr. Jesse says that if some of the eggs be removed, and only one or two be left, the bird will continue to lay for a long time, but that if three be left she will sit.

The nest is placed in a hollow scraped in the ground, with or without the fortuitous shelter of a clod of earth or tuft of herbage. It is placed in various situations, and is made of grasses, and a few chance leaves, the coarser outside, the finer on the inner part. The male bird appears to bring the materials to the spot, where the female is engaged in arranging them. The young are hatched in about a fortnight: they do not quit the nest until fully fledged, but return to it to roost at night for some time after they have left it.

The eggs, three, four, or five in number, vary much both in form and colour; some are of a greyish white colour, with a tinge of purple or green, and freckled and mottled nearly all over with a darker shade of grey, greyish brown, or brown; others are of a deep sombre colour, and in some the chief part of the colour is concentrated at the larger end, either wholly or only partially around it. They are usually placed with their smaller ends towards the centre.

Male; length, seven inches and a quarter to seven and a half; bill, dark brown above, and pale yellowish brown at the base of the lower part; iris, dark brown: over it is a pale yellowish brown streak. The feathers at the base of the bill are tipped with bristles; a sort of crest is frequently raised on the top of the head, the feathers there being rather long; head on the sides, pale yellowish brown, on the crown, dark brown, the edges of the feathers paler than the rest; neck on the back, and nape, brown of three shades, the centre of the feathers, along the shaft, being the darkest, and the margin the lightest part; chin, pale yellowish brown; throat and breast on the upper part, the same, with a tinge of rufous, and spotted with small streaks of dark brown; underneath, the latter is pale yellowish white; back, as the nape.

The wings, which expand to nearly the width of one foot three inches, extend to within an inch and a quarter of the end of the tail; the first feather is extremely short, the second shorter than the third, which is the longest in the wing, the fourth almost the same length; greater and lesser wing coverts, brown, with broad light brown edges; primaries, dusky brown, the second with the outer web brownish white, the others edged with the same; secondaries, dusky brown, tipped with whitish, and edged more broadly with reddish brown; tertiaries, brown, with broad light brown edges. The tail, somewhat forked, dusky brown, the edges of each feather being light brown; the two central ones are brown, broadly edged with light reddish brown; the outer feather on each side is white on the outer web, excepting at the base, with a longitudinal oblique streak of white on the inner web; the next to it dusky on the inner web, the outer web, or the greater portion of it, white: all the feathers are rather broad. Upper tail coverts, as the nape; under tail coverts, pale yellowish brown; legs, yellowish brown, paler in some specimens, the joints dusky; toes, dusky brown, the middle one rather long, the hind one very long, and slightly curved; claws, dusky brown, the hind one very long and straight, except the outer half, which is slightly curved.

The female closely resembles the male in appearance and plumage. Length, nearly seven inches: the wings expand to the width of one foot one inch.

The young are of a light yellowish grey colour, the feathers of the upper parts being dusky, tipped and margined with the former. In their second plumage the dark markings are darker than in the old birds, and the bill and feet paler; the claws, especially of the hind toe, shorter.

Varieties occasionally occur; some are seen pure white, and others cream-colour, and some, though these are rare cases, mottled with white. William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, describes one which had the primaries, secondaries, and tail snowy white; and another, a true albino, with red eyes. In confinement they sometimes turn black, probably the result of some peculiarity in the food; one such, however, recorded by Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, has been shot in a wild state. In confinement, too, the claws have been known to grow to the length of two inches.

# CRESTED LARK.

*Alauda cristata*, GOULD.

THE Crested Lark is a European bird, an inhabitant of Italy, Sicily, Crete, Switzerland, Turkey, Greece, Spain, Hungary, France, Germany, Poland, Holland, Belgium, Siberia, and Russia, the latter in the summer, and other countries of this continent; as also in Asia Minor, and in Egypt and other northern parts of Africa.

In this country one was shot in the county of Sussex, and another is said to have been killed near Taney, in Ireland; but the description does not seem to me to correspond.

It is a migratory species, moving from south to north in the spring, and backwards again in the autumn.

This bird is represented as approaching near to villages and houses, and as being rather solitary than gregarious in its habits.

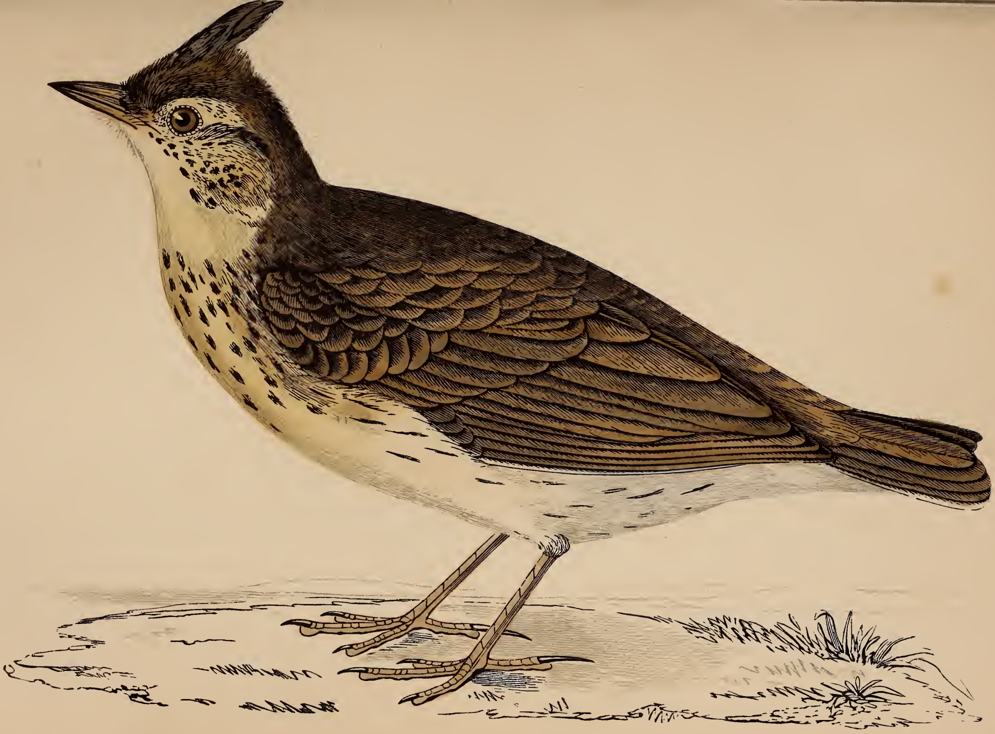
Its food consists of insects of various sorts, worms, and grain.

Its song is sweet and agreeable, and is continued till the month of September.

The nest is placed on the ground, and is made of grasses.

The eggs are four or five in number, of a light grey colour, spotted with light and dark brown.

Male; length, six inches and three quarters; bill, rather strong and large, and decurved towards the point, brown along the ridge and at the end, and paler on the sides and at the base; iris, dark brown: a buff white streak passes from it over the eye. Head on the crown, reddish brown, with a few of the feathers elongated, forming a crest, and pointing backwards; neck on the back, and nape, dark brown, in front pale yellowish brown; chin, white; throat and breast, pale yellow brown, streaked in front and on the sides with darker



CRESTED LARK.

brown; back, brown, the shaft and centre of each feather dark brown. The second quill feather of the wing is the longest; greater and lesser wing coverts, brown, the shaft and centre of each feather darker, and the edges buff white; tertiaries, edged with buff white. The tail has the two middle feathers nearly uniform light brown, the outer one on each side light brown, with a buff white margin on the outside, the rest of the feathers dark brown; legs, toes, and claws, pale brown.

The female is rather less in size than the male, and the crest is less conspicuous.

This bird, or rather one should say a bird by this name, as it seems doubtful whether our older writers knew it at all, has been made by some of them into two species, by the names of the Greater and the Lesser Crested Lark, the latter being the female, or the young, of their supposed Crested Lark.

I do not read of any varieties of this bird as assuming the 'drapeau blanc.'

# SNOW BUNTING.

SNOW FLAKE. SNOW FLECK. SNOW FOWL. TAWNY BUNTING.
GREAT PIED MOUNTAIN FINCH. MOUNTAIN BUNTING.
LESSER MOUNTAIN FINCH. BRAMBLING. GREATER BRAMBLING.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Plectrophanes nivalis,* | Meyer. Selby. |
| *Emberiza nivalis,* | Linnæus. Gmelin. Latham. |
| " *glacialis,* | Latham. Pennant. |
| " *mustelina,* | Gmelin. |
| " *montana,* | Gmelin. Latham. Pennant. |

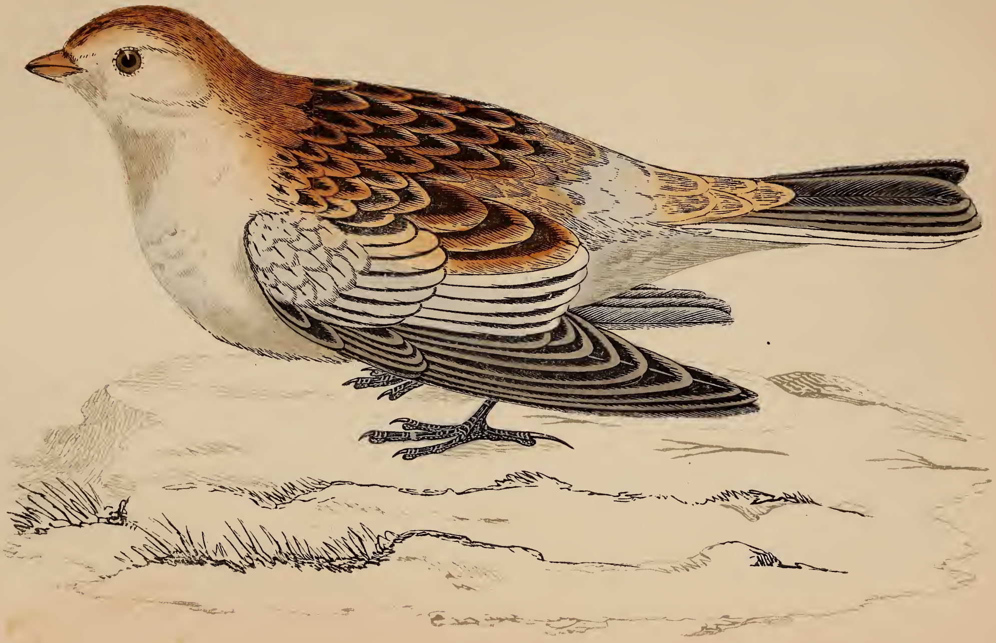
*Plectrophanes.* *Plĕctron*—A spur. *Phainö*—To shew. *Nivalis*—Snowy.

The plate is taken from a drawing by my friend, the Rev. R. P. Alington, M.A., Rector of Swinhope, Lincolnshire.

This pretty-looking species is a native of the icy countries of the Arctic regions, and the islands of the Polar seas. The Rev. Dr. Scoresby, whose name is so well known as Captain Scoresby, the hardy 'voyageur' to far severer climes than even those where the 'Canadian Boat Song' is heard, met with great numbers on the frozen lands of Spitzbergen.

It is found in all the northern parts of Europe and America, and builds in the North Georgian Islands, Melville Island, Southampton Island, Lapland, Iceland, Nova Zembla, Greenland, Siberia, Norway, Sweden, the Ferroe Isles, and no doubt in various other northern countries; it occurs also in Germany, France, Austria, and Holland, and even in some instances in Italy.

It is a winter visitant to Shetland and the Orkney Islands, where as many as fifty-seven have been killed at one shot; Scotland, and the north of England and Ireland, advancing in some few instances to the extreme south of our island; but it must be there sadly out of its element, like some Scotch



SNOW BUNTING

ladies whom I heard the other day lamenting that they never found it cold enough in England.

Sir Oswald Mosley, Bart., relates in the 'Zoologist,' page 1209, that one was met with near Rolleston Hall, his seat, near Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, in the month of October, 1845. It was knocked down by a labourer with a stone.

The numbers of these birds diminish from Yorkshire southwards, in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire, and a few have been met with occasionally even in Surrey, Sussex, and Devonshire, and other southern counties. One was shot near Liskeard, in Cornwall, as N. Hare, Esq. informs me, in March, 1851; one near Falmouth, by T. Harvey, Esq.; one by Mr. Copeland, at Pendennis Castle, in October, 1843; three by Mr. May, in subsequent years, between the Castle and Pennance Point; and one by Mr. Row, of Devonport, on Roborough Down, October 11th., 1851; and I have one, presented to me by Mr. John Dickson, of Nafferton, which was shot near Seamer, in the East-Riding of Yorkshire, on the 25th. of March, 1851.

Mountainous regions are their natural resort, which they leave for lower and more sheltered grounds when severe weather comes on.

The Snow Buntings move southwards about the end of October, betaking themselves to the sea-shores of Scotland, and also to many parts of England in severe weather, retiring inland at intervals, or as it becomes milder, when they resort to farm-yards and roads, where they meet with grain of various kinds. In the year 1849, a few were seen at Waxham, near Yarmouth, in Norfolk, by W. E. Cater, Esq., of Queen's College, Cambridge, as early as the 27th. of September. It would seem, from the fact of Mr. Macgillivray's having seen both old and young birds together in the month of August, 1830, that some build on the Grampian Hills, renowned in song as the dwelling of 'Young Norval;' but for the most part they remove to their more favourite haunts about the middle of April. The young appear to be only able to fly by about the end of July; and it is asserted that they venture farther southwards than the old birds.

These birds, which are believed to pair for life, seem, at the time when they have young, to be fearless, it being but little experience of man, as an enemy, that they have had in their lonely climes. They are very good eating, as are the rest of the Buntings. They may be kept, and have even been known to breed, in confinement.

Their flight is described as low, performed in an undulated line, by means of repeated flappings, and short intervals of cessation; when they have arrived at a fitting place, they wheel suddenly round, and alight rather abruptly, when the white of the wings and tail becomes very conspicuous. They run with great celerity along the sand, moving each foot alternately, and when engaged in this manner, doubtless in search of food, or of small sand and gravel, may be easily approached within a few yards. They usually perch on a crag or rock, the top of a wall, a rail, or a stack, and sometimes it is said, on trees: they roost on the ground.

Their food consists principally of the different sorts of grain, and the seeds of grasses and other plants, as also of small mollusca, the caterpillars and chrysalides of insects, and insects themselves.

The note is low and soft, and it is uttered on the wing when the male bird serenades his mate, rising a little way into the air, and hovering about with expanded wings and tail.

The nest, which is made of dry grass, lined with hair and a few feathers, is generally fixed in the crevice of a rock, or among stones on the ground. Captain Lyons, R.N., found one placed in the bosom of a dead Esquimaux child, a situation suggestive of affecting thoughts, but the history connected with which must remain unknown until that day when both land and sea shall give up their dead. Others have been found under the shelter of the drift timber, which is, alas! but too frequently to be met with on the shores of the frozen seas. How many a tale also does it tell with its expressive though silent voice,

> 'Of those
> For whom the place was kept,
> At board and hearth so long.'

Fervently do I trust that the 'brave old oak' of the gallant Sir John Franklin's trusty ships, may yet be found to have afforded no shelter for the nest of the Snow-flake, but that in the words of the still-used form of the old bills of lading, 'so may the good ship arrive at her desired port in safety.'

The eggs, from four to six in number, are greenish or bluish white, encircled at the thicker end with irregular brown spots, and many blots of pale purple: they are rather round and obtuse in form. Meyer mentions one in the possession of Mr. Hancock, of Newcastle, marked all over with spots of a reddish and purple hue.

Male; length, about six inches and a half, or rather more, to six and three quarters and seven inches; bill, yellow, brownish black at the tip—entirely yellow in summer; iris, chesnut brown. Head on the back, pale yellowish brown, or chesnut—white in summer; crown, bright chesnut brown mixed with white, the tips of the feathers being reddish brown in winter: sometimes it is white. Neck on the back, greyish brown—white in summer; in front a gorget of bright chesnut brown mixed with white; nape, white in summer, tinged with greyish or brownish red in winter; chin, white; throat, white, tinged with chesnut in winter; breast, white, with more or less yellowish brown on the sides—wholly white in summer. The feathers of the back black in summer, at other times deeply edged with greyish white, or pale yellowish, or reddish brown.

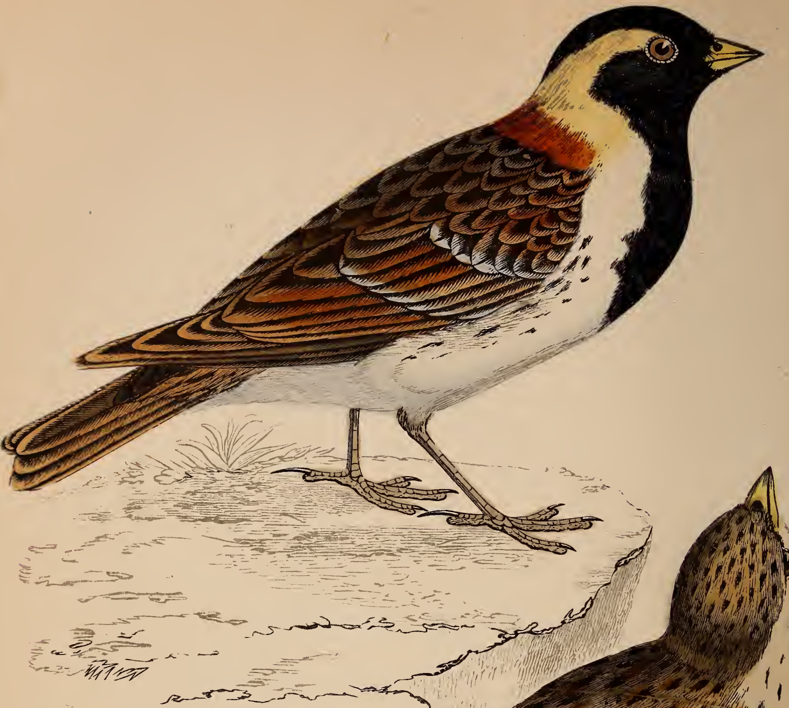
The wings extend to the width of one foot one inch. The first quill feather is the longest; greater and lesser wing coverts, white; primaries, black, slightly edged with white—wholly black in summer. In some the first, and in others the second feather is the longest; secondaries, mostly white, but in younger birds black edged with white, and in adult birds some are black in summer; tertiaries, white. The tail has the two or three outer feathers white, with a dark streak along the shaft on the outer web some way down from the tip, and a small black spot near the tip; the rest blackish brown, edged with brownish white—pure black in summer; upper tail coverts, black, broadly margined with reddish brown in winter, or mingled tawny and white. Legs, toes, and claws, black, the hind one lengthened and nearly straight.

The female has the colours more dull with less white. Length, six inches and a quarter; bill, as in the male; iris, as in the male. The head on the sides and crown is very light chesnut brown; neck on the back, yellowish grey, the upper part with brownish grey instead of reddish margins; on the sides dark yellowish grey, in front dull chesnut brown in the form of a band, its edges on the sides streaked with dusky. Throat, pale yellowish grey; breast, light grey or greyish white, tinged on the sides with chesnut brown. The black on the back is not so pure as in the male bird, and the margins of the feathers are light yellowish brown.

The wings extend to the width of one foot and a quarter of an inch; lesser wing coverts, dusky, the first row tipped with dull white. The primaries have the white band tinged with dusky, and of much less extent, being only visible on seven of the quills; the secondaries have a large proportion of brownish black, and some white. Tail, brownish black, the two only of the side feathers being white, and it very dull; the next being only in general paler on the inner web; under tail coverts, greyish white.

The young, in the autumn, have the bill dull brownish yellow, darker at the point. Head on the sides, light chesnut brown, mixed with grey; crown, dark chesnut brown; neck on the back, light chesnut brown, mixed with grey, on the sides reddish brown; chin and throat, greyish white, tinged with reddish brown. The breast has a reddish brown band, edged at its sides with brownish black across its fore part; below it is greyish white. Back, mottled with brownish black and reddish brown, the centre of each feather being of the former colour; lesser wing coverts, brownish white, with a central dusky streak; primaries, brownish black, edged with greyish white, white at the base, which colour extends on the inner web. Several of the secondaries are mostly white, but all of them have dusky or light brown towards the end: the three inner ones are without white, and mottled with brownish black and reddish brown. Tail, brownish black, edged with brownish grey; the three outer feathers almost entirely white, there being only a streak from the tip, including part of the outer web. Toes, brownish black.

This is a most variable species, especially in the male birds, the black being more or less intense, the white more or less extended, and the reddish brown both more or less extensive, and varying also in depth of tint. The bill is sometimes pure yellow, but in general tinged with brownish black or light brown at the tip, both above and below. Mr. Macgillivray mentions one which he shot in the year 1835, at the ever-famous Preston Pans, in East Lothian, which was all over of a cream-colour, the head and upper tail coverts tinged with red, the eye light red, and the bill, feet, and claws, pale yellow.



LAPLAND BUNTING.

# LAPLAND BUNTING.

LAPLAND LARK BUNTING.
LAPLAND FINCH. LAPLAND LONG-SPUR.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Plectrophanes lapponica,* | SELBY. |
| *Emberiza lapponica,* | JENYNS. |
| " *calcarata,* | TEMMINCK. |
| *Fringilla lapponica,* | LINNÆUS. LATHAM. |
| " *calcarata,* | PALLAS. |
| " *montana,* | BRISSON. |

*Plectrophanes.* *Plĕctron*—A spur. *Phainŏ*—To shew.
*Lapponica*—...........?

THIS bird is a native both of Europe and Asia, being found along the Uralian chain of mountains which separate the two continents; and, in the former, in Siberia, Sweden, Lapland, Spitzbergen, the Ferroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, and a few so far south as Germany, France, Prussia, Poland, Silesia, and Switzerland. It occurs also in the Arctic portions of North America, and some stragglers are occasionally seen in the more southern parts of that portion of the continent.

In this country one was purchased some years ago in the London market; a second was taken on the Downs, near Brighton, in the county of Sussex; and a third in the same neighbourhood on the 30th. of September, 1844. A fourth was captured in September, 1828, a few miles north of London; a fifth was caught near Preston, in Lancashire, in the month of October, in the year 1833, and a sixth was taken in a trap by a bird-catcher, near Kendal, in Westmoreland, at the end of June or beginning of July. It was either a female or a young male, as were all the other recorded specimens, excepting the second of those taken near Brighton.

The Lapland Bunting gives a natural preference to the sterile tracts of the north, where the whole scene is wild and desolate, and none but the most scanty vegetation clothes the mountainous and hilly prospect.

It moves southwards to avoid severe weather. It is said to be capable of being easily kept in confinement.

Its flight, when roused, is described as being quick and buoyant, but for the most part it is to be seen on the ground, where it runs along, holding its body, as do its relatives the Larks, in an inclined position, intent doubtless on the one great object of its daily life, the procuring its necessary food. If a bird of prey appears while it is on the wing, it alights and crouches close to the ground.

The food of this bird consists of the seeds of various Arctic and Alpine plants, especially, it is said, those of the willow and the Alpine arbutus, and also of insects.

The note is described by Meyer as sounding like the syllables 'itirr,' and 'twee;' and it utters it more while on the wing than when perched. In addition to these the male is reported to have a pleasing song.

The nest is placed on some small hillock in low marshy situations, among moss and stones, and is built of stems of grass, neatly and compactly lined with hair or feathers.

The eggs, usually six or seven in number, are pale yellow, spotted with brown.

Male; length, six inches and a half, and six and three quarters; bill, yellow, blackish at the tip; in the winter brownish yellow; from its base a narrow streak of white passes downwards, till it nearly joins that mentioned presently, which proceeds from above the eye. Iris, dark brown, or, according to Meyer, chesnut; a reddish or brownish white streak runs backwards from it, and then descends along the sides of the neck to the breast, where it joins the white of that part; it is palest near the bill. In the second Brighton specimen, as described by William Borrer, Esq., Jun., the bill was bluish red, excepting the tip, which was black. Forehead, crown, and back of the head, rich black, the feathers broadly edged with brownish red or greyish white after the autumnal moult; those at the base of the bill black; sides of the head reddish, spotted with black. Neck in front, black, deepest in summer; on the back light reddish brown, mixed with greyish in winter; nape, bright chesnut brown. Chin, throat, and breast above, black; the feathers strongly edged with greyish white in the winter after the autumnal moult; below dull white, streaked and spotted with blackish on the sides, which become brownish in the autumn. Back, bright chesnut brown and grey on the upper part, with blackish spots, on the remainder the feathers are dark brown, with reddish brown edges, and each feather is dusky along the shaft.

Greater and lesser wing coverts, blackish brown, with a broad margin of reddish, some of the latter tipped with white; primaries, blackish brown, edged with reddish white, with narrow light-coloured margins on the outer webs; the first is the longest; secondaries, blackish brown, edged with rust-colour or whitish; tertiaries, blackish brown, with a broad margin of reddish. The tail, which is forked, is blackish brown, with reddish or greyish edges to the feathers, the two outer with a white wedge-shaped spot at the end of the inner web, and having the whole of the outer one of that colour; upper tail coverts, dark brown, the edges of the feathers reddish brown. Legs and toes, brownish black, or black, probably according to the season; claws, black, the hind claw nearly straight, and longer than the toe.

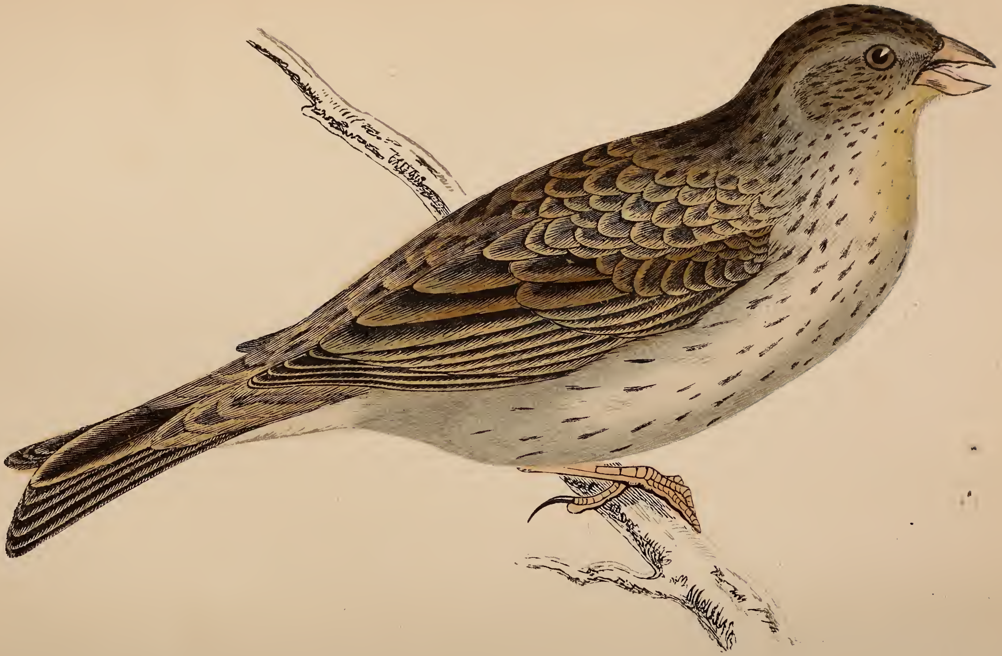
After the autumnal moult, when in the 'transition state,' the male resembles the female.

The female has the yellowish or reddish white stripe behind the eye duller than in the male, and it unites with a white line which proceeds from the corner of the bill. Head on the crown, and neck on the back, a mixture of reddish and black, the feathers edged with pale reddish brown and grey; on the lower part of the front and on the sides it is brownish grey, tinged with red in summer, and longitudinally streaked with blackish. Nape, chesnut brown, the feathers fringed with white; chin, greyish white; throat, white, or greyish white in summer; the white not so pure as in the male; bordered on the sides by a broad band. Breast, blackish above, the feathers edged with pale brown and grey; below it is whitish, with numerous grey and black spots, and longitudinal spots on the sides. There is a tinge of grey and a little red at the lower part.

Back, reddish grey, with black spots, as the head, on the upper part, and on the lower, whitish, tinged with grey, and a little red in summer. Tail, blackish brown, the outer edge and part of the inner web at the end of the side feathers, brownish white, of which there is a small oblique mark at the end of the second feather; under tail coverts, whitish, tinged with grey and a little red.

The young bird after the first moult has the bill yellowish brown; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, dark brown, the feathers with light brown edges, giving it a streaked appearance; chin and throat, whitish with small longitudinal spots; breast, pale reddish or brownish white, spotted with darker brown on the lower part and sides; back, dark brown, the feathers with light brown edges; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, bordered with deep red. The tail has a reddish spot on the outer feather, and a longitudinal one on the next; legs, toes, and claws, light brown.

The young female has the bill yellowish brown; from its lower corner extends a streak of dark brown spots; over the eye is a broad streak of pale brown; head on the sides, brown, partly mixed with black, as the crown; neck on the back, and nape, pale brown, tinged with yellowish grey, the shafts of the feathers blackish brown; in front the neck is dull white, with dusky streaks down the shafts of the feathers. Throat, yellowish white; breast, dull white, with dusky streaks down the shafts of the feathers. Greater wing coverts, blackish brown, deeply margined with chesnut brown, the tips white; primaries, dusky, with paler edges; secondaries, blackish brown, deeply margined with chesnut brown, the tips white; legs, toes, and claws, brown.



BUNTING.

# BUNTING.

COMMON BUNTING. CORN BUNTING. BUNTING LARK.

*Emberiza miliaria*, PENNANT. MONTAGU. BEWICK.

*Emberiza*—... ........? *Miliaria*—A bird that feeds on millet.

THE bird before us is a native of Europe and Asia; in the former, in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, and southwards in Germany, Greece, and the Mediterranean, and in the latter in Asia Minor.

The Bunting is a common bird in most, though not in all, parts of the kingdom, frequenting the cultivated districts, and these almost exclusively, in Yorkshire, Shropshire, Sussex, Cornwall, Norfolk, Suffolk, Lancashire, Northumberland, Cumberland, Durham, and other counties; in Wales also, and in various parts of Scotland—Dumfriesshire, Edinburghshire, and Sutherlandshire, as also in the Orkneys, where it breeds; in the Hebrides and Shetland Islands. It is not, however, invariably to be found in plenty in situations in which it might be looked for in abundance, as in other similar ones, but is somewhat capricious in the choice of its localities.

It is believed to be in some degree migratory, and that our flocks are reinforced at the commencement of winter by others from the Continent; partial movements, at all events, take place in the winter.

Though seen only in pairs in the spring and summer, these birds associate in the autumn and winter months with others, both those of their own, though not numerously, and those of other species; a community of object producing a 'communism' of habit—an ornithological 'socialism,' which may be defended on the most abstract and practical principles of right. 'Corn-laws' and 'Protection' have no place in their 'statute book;' 'free trade in corn' is the motto of the Bunting Lark; he has only regard to 'home consumption,' and ignores all 'duties,' save those which hunger dictates.

In that very pleasing volume, the 'Journal of a Naturalist,' Mr. Knapp says, 'It could hardly be supposed that this bird, not larger than a Lark, is capable of doing serious injury; yet I this morning witnessed a rick of barley, standing in a detached field, entirely stripped of its thatching, which this Bunting effected by seizing the end of the straw, and deliberately drawing it out, to search for any grain the ear might contain; the base of the rick being entirely surrounded by the straw, one end resting on the ground, the other against the mow, as it slid down from the summit, and regularly placed, as if by the hand; and so completely was the thatching pulled off, that the immediate removal of the corn became necessary. The Sparrow and other birds burrow into the stack, and pilfer the corn, but the deliberate unroofing the edifice appears to be the habit of this Bunting alone.'

They are rather, though by no means very shy birds, but frequently in the breeding-season and in the autumn sit close. They may sometimes be seen dusting themselves in the roads, like the Larks and Sparrows, and other birds. They also wash themselves; and may be kept in confinement.

The flight of the Bunting is heavy and strong, rather undulated, performed by alternate beatings and cessations, and in some degree laboured, as if the wings were hardly equal, without exertion, to support the weight of the body. If suddenly disturbed, they fly off in a straight direction, with drooping legs, a constant flutter of the wings, and an audible 'whirr,' reminding one somewhat of the Partridge. At night they roost in bushes or hedges, and also on the ground, in stubble-fields. They move along the ground by hopping.

The food of the Corn Bunting consists of corn and such seeds as it meets with; beetles, such as cockchaffers, in their season, and other insects. It is consequently a good bird to eat, and, from its ponderous and bulky size, by no means despicable for the table; such at least I have found it at the 'Grammar School of King Edward the Sixth,' at which it was to be supposed that I received my education.

The note of the Bunting, which is uttered both when the bird is perched and on the wing, is harsh and unmusical, ordinarily only a 'chuck' or 'chit,' which, quickly run together and then protracted, form the staple of its song: it is heard at a considerable distance.

Nidification commences towards the end of April.

The nest, which is begun and finished in the course of this month, is usually placed on the ground, or only slightly raised above it by coarse herbage, and frequently on a bank, sometimes in a bush, or under a hedge, among the grass, is composed of small roots and dry straws and grasses, lined with smaller grasses, and small fibrous roots, moss, and hair, rather neatly, but not finely compacted. It is somewhat large and thick, but shallow inside.

The eggs, generally four, or rarely five or six, in number, and of an obtuse oval shape, are of a whitish colour, with a slight tinge of grey or red, sometimes pale purple red, streaked and spotted in a very irregular manner with dark purple brown and pale greyish purple. They differ a good deal in size, shape, and colour. In some the ground-colour is nearly white.

Male; weight, nearly two ounces; length, rather more than seven inches and a quarter, or seven and a half; Mr. Macgillivray has met with one over eight inches long; bill, short and thick, the upper one dark brown, excepting on the edges towards the base, which, as also the under one, is pale yellow brown. Its shape, as in the rest of the family, is very peculiar —the upper part is smaller than the lower, and fits closely into it when shut. Iris, dark brown; over it is a faint line of pale yellowish grey; head, crown, and neck on the back, pale yellowish brown, inclining to olive-colour, streaked with darker brown on the centre of each feather; in front, the latter has each feather tipped with a triangular spot of brownish black, the spots being larger and darker along a line on each side; nape, as the back of the neck. Chin, throat, and breast, dull whitish or yellowish brown—the latter colour in winter, the former in summer—marked on the sides with streaked spots of dark brown, which are more lengthened lower down; the shafts of the feathers being dusky; a gorget of small brown spots passes from the base of the bill, and so spreads over the breast. Back, pale yellowish brown, streaked with darker brown on the centre of each feather along the shaft; in autumn it assumes an olive tint.

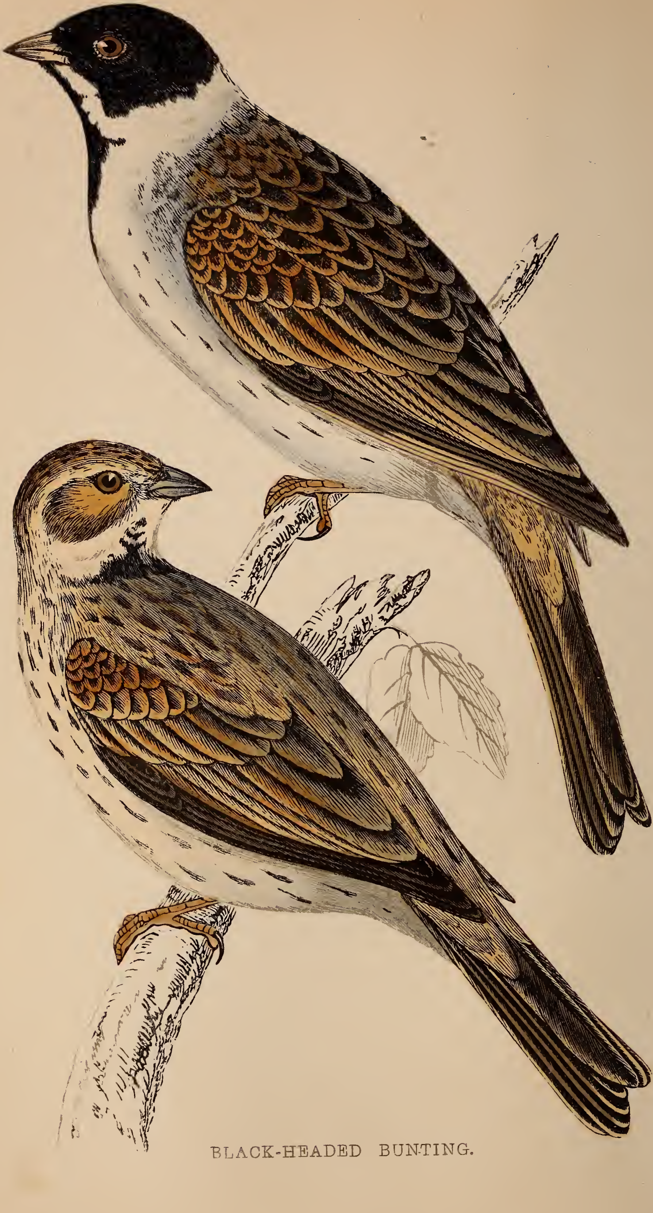
The wings expand to the width of one foot one inch. In Mr. Macgillivray's specimen, spoken of above, the wings extended to the width of one foot one inch and a half. Greater wing coverts, dark brown, broadly margined with pale brown; lesser wing coverts, the same, the first row tipped with light yellowish brown; primaries and secondaries, dark brown, the edges of the feathers lighter coloured; the first quill feather is a little shorter than the second, the second a little shorter than the third, which is the longest in the wing; the fourth a little shorter than the first; tertiaries, dark brown, broadly margined with pale brown. Tail, dark brown, the edges of the feathers lighter coloured—it is slightly forked, and rather long; upper tail coverts, pale brown, streaked with darker brown on the centre of each feather; under tail coverts, pale yellowish brown, dusky on the shafts. Legs, pale yellow brown, with a tinge of red; toes, dull yellow; claws, deep brown.

The female is not distinguishable in markings or colour from the male. Length, seven inches and a quarter. The wings expand to the width of one foot and three quarters of an inch.

The young, when fully fledged, are nearly of the same colour as their parents; the upper parts lighter, the lower pale grey, with dark oblong spots; after the first moult the colours deepen, but the young are still to be distinguished from the old by the dark markings being more lengthened.

Varieties are not very unfrequent in which white more or less occurs. One has been met with almost entirely white. One is mentioned by my brother, Beverley R. Morris, Esq., M.D., in 'The Naturalist,' new series, vol. i, page 46, as having been met with at Pickering, on the 10th. of March, 1850, which was of a very pale straw-colour, with a few brown spots.

Mr. George Johnson, of Melton Ross, Lincolnshire, has one of these birds, he informs me, nearly white.



BLACK-HEADED BUNTING.

# BLACK-HEADED BUNTING.

REED BUNTING. WATER SPARROW. CHINK. BLACK BONNET.
PASSERINE BUNTING. MOUNTAIN SPARROW.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Emberiza schœniclus,* | PENNANT. MONTAGU. |
| “ *passerina,* | LATHAM. |
| “ *schœniculus,* | GOULD. |
| “ *arundinacea,* | GMELIN. LATHAM. |
| *Passer arundinaceus,* | RAY. |

*Emberiza*—............?

*Schœniclus*—Some water bird, probably from *Scoinos*—A rush.

ON the continent of Europe this species is plentiful from Holland to Italy; and is found in summer in Russia, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, arriving in April, and leaving again in September.

The Reed Bunting is common enough with us in the neighbourhood of water, whether that of the river, the stream, the lake, the marsh, or the pond; and is also at times met with in other and very dissimilar situations throughout England. Near Falmouth it is scarce; one was shot at Swanpool, on the 16th. of January, 1850. It occurs in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, as also in the Hebrides. In the Orkneys it has been occasionally met with; and in the summer of 1845 a pair were observed with a nest in a plantation at Muddisdale, near Kirkwall.

In the winter these birds move, at least the majority, but not all of them, from the more northern parts in a southerly direction, quitting in September or October, and returning in March or April. They are sprightly, active, and elegant in their appearance, though they have no gay plumage to strike the eye of a casual observer. They are watchful and rather shy, but do not remove far when alarmed, quickly settling down again.

The present is another of the species of birds which display a strong instinctive solicitude for their young. In the 'Magazine of Natural History,' vol. viii, page 505, Mr. Salmon, of Thetford, writes, 'Walking last spring among some rushes growing near a river, my attention was arrested by observing a Black-headed Bunting shuffling through the rushes, and trailing along the ground, as if one of her legs or wings were broken. I followed her to see the result; and she having led me to some considerable distance, took wing; no doubt much rejoiced on return to find her stratagems had been successful in preserving her young brood; although not in preventing the discovery of her nest, containing five young ones, which I found was placed, as usual, on the side of a hassock, or clump of grass, and almost screened from view by overhanging dead grass.' They may be kept in captivity: I have seen one in a large aviary with a number of other birds of various species, but it was by far the most wild of any of them.

In the winter months they gather in small flocks or assemblages, which disperse again to their various 'country quarters' towards the end of March.

Their flight is tolerably even and rather rapid, performed in a rather undulated line, the wings being opened and shut from time to time. Meyer points out how, when roused from their nests by any one walking through their haunts, they spring up and cling to the slender stems of the osiers or reeds, flitting anxiously from one to another; and that they sit in a very upright position, swinging upon the weak sprays, which their light weight causes to bend under them, and continually expanding and closing the feathers of their tails by a very quick side motion; the white of which they also display, when abruptly alighting, as is their wont.

Their food consists of insects, and the seeds of reeds and other aquatic plants.

The note is rendered by Meyer by the word 'sherrip' pronounced quickly; a mere chirp of two notes, the first repeated three or four times, the last single and more sharp. It is heard at tolerably frequent intervals; the bird in the mean time perched on some small twig, and remaining in a listless sort of attitude.

The nest is commonly placed on the ground, among coarse grass, weeds, sedge, or rushes, on a bank near the edge of the water which the bird frequents, and occasionally in the lower part of some low bush or stump, a few inches above the ground; sometimes it is said to have been met with in a furze or gorse bush, at a considerable distance from water; and Mr. Hewitson relates that he has, though rarely, found it at an elevation of two feet or more above the water, and supported on a mass of fallen reeds. It is composed of grasses and fragments of rushes, lined with the down of the reed, a little moss, or finer grass, or hair.

The eggs are four or five in number, of a pale purple brown, greenish, or brownish, or purple white colour, streaked and strongly spotted in a pleasing manner with a darker shade of the same; sometimes the end is delicately marked with a texture of fine lines. They are laid about the first week in May, and occasionally a second brood is produced in July. They are oblong, and taper at each end.

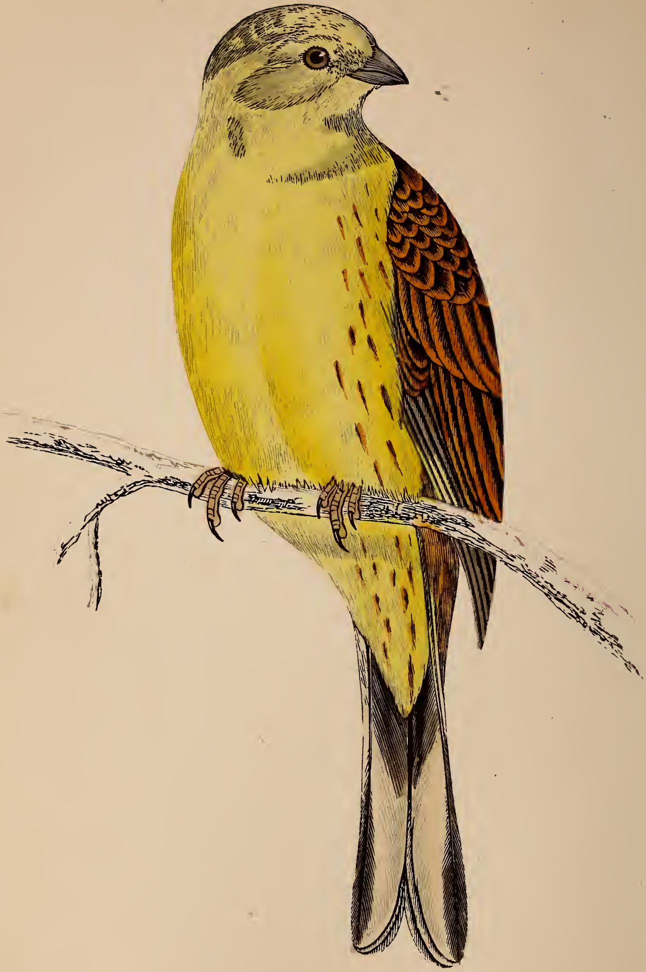
Male; length, six inches and a quarter; bill, dusky brown above, paler beneath; a white streak passes from its corner backwards, meeting the white collar presently mentioned; iris, dark brown; when excited, the bird raises up the feathers on the head. Head on the crown and sides velvet black, bounded by a collar of white, which descends to the breast; the black feathers assume reddish brown tips after the autumnal moult, until the following spring, and the collar becomes greyish white. Neck on the back and nape, black, excepting the white collar, and broadly edged with rusty brown after the autumnal moult, all the colours being then obscured together; chin and throat, black, ending in a point tending downwards; after the autumnal moult the feathers are tipped with greyish brown until the following spring; breast, dull bluish grey white, darkest on the sides, where it is also streaked with brown. The feathers of the back are blackish, bordered with rufous brown, interspersed with grey, which latter colour prevails lower down, the shafts of the feathers being blackish.

The wings expand to the width of nine inches and three quarters; greater and lesser wing coverts, dusky black, each feather being broadly margined with rufous; primaries, dusky black, margined with rufous; the first four quill feathers are nearly equal in length, but the second is rather the longest, the fifth, according to Yarrell, shorter than the first, but Macgillivray says that they are equal; secondaries, dusky black; tertiaries, dusky black on the inner web, reddish on the outer, and margined with white. The tail is rather long and slightly forked; the two outer feathers on each side are white, with an oblique dusky brown patch at the base and tip, the shafts black; the middle pair are dark brown, slightly margined with rufous, the others blackish brown; upper tail coverts, bluish grey streaked with blackish, the shafts being of that colour; under tail coverts, white. Legs, toes, and claws, dusky brown.

The female is rather less in size than the male. Length, five inches and a half; from the base of the bill extends a brown streak, joining a patch of that colour under the neck, and spreading over the breast in dusky spots. Iris, dusky brown; over it is a pale yellowish or reddish grey streak, which meets that on the back of the neck. Head and crown, dusky reddish or yellowish brown, varied with darker brown on the centre of the feathers; there is a band of pale yellowish or reddish grey round the back of the neck, which in front is of the same colour, with two irregular bands of blackish brown. On each side of the chin descends a streak of dark brown; throat and breast, dull white, more clouded with greyish brown than in the male, and streaked with dark reddish brown; back, dusky, bordered with rusty brown. Greater and lesser wing coverts, broadly edged with rufous; tertiaries, broadly edged with rufous; upper tail coverts, pale greyish brown tinged with red. Legs, toes, and claws, pale brown.

The young birds resemble the female, but with duller tints, and the sides of the head of a brownish grey colour. The black on the head is assumed by the young males in the following spring after their first autumn, and the white ring is not so conspicuous as in older birds; the bill is a bluish red colour, and the legs the same; the eye as in the adult bird.

A pied variety of this species, a male, was met with in the year 1850, at Longhirst, in Northumberland. It was beautifully mottled with black, brown, and white, but white was the predominant colour.



YELLOW-HAMMER.

# YELLOW-HAMMER.

YELLOW BUNTING. YELLOW YOWLEY.
YELLOW YELDRING. YELLOW YOLDRING. YELLOW YITE.
YELDROCK. YOLKRING. YOIT. SKITE. GOLDIE.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Emberiza citrinella,* | PENNANT. MONTAGU. |
| " *flava,* | BRISSON. |

*Emberiza*—...........? *Citrinella. Citrus*—A citron or lemon tree?

THE Yellow-hammer is found throughout the European continent, from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, to the shores of the Mediterranean. It is, however, most plentiful in the midland parts—decreasing in numbers towards the north and south extremities.

This is one of the most common birds that we have in this country, and is more particularly observable in the summer time, when there is not a hedge alongside of which you can walk, without seeing one after another flitting out before you, and then in again, 'here and there and everywhere.' The nest is, or is to be, somewhere near, and hence the greater apparent frequency of the Yellow-hammer at this season. In the winter they are more collected together in flocks. They frequent, for the most part, the cultivated districts, those that are destitute of wood being uncongenial to them, but they are found on such wastes as are covered with gorse or broom.

In Orkney this species is by no means plentiful, and is chiefly observed in winter: the same remark applies to Shetland. During the summer of 1846, a pair built their nest in the garden at Daisy Bank, near Kirkwall; and another pair bred the same season at Pabdale.

Yellow-hammers are gregarious birds, consorting in the winter months with flocks of other species, as well as of their own. They roost generally on the ground, and you may see them in the dusk of the evening, when they are retiring to rest, flitting about in numbers on the sides of banks, disturbed by your approach. In very cold weather they are said to seek for the night the shelter of bushes, ivy, and shrubs, as a protection against the 'cauld blast,' which the houseless and homeless wanderer instinctively shrinks from encountering on the wide heath, the solitary moor, or the lonely road; when it is a

'Winter's evening,
And fast falls down the snow.'

The male bird is carefully attentive to the female when engaged during the period of incubation with her maternal duties, brings her food, and takes his turn in sitting upon the eggs. They have a habit, when perched, of flirting the tail up and down, when it is also slightly expanded. Both shew much affection for their young, and in many cases, if not in all, the parent birds keep in company throughout the winter, frequently with their family also. Even when large flocks are collected together in hard weather, it is very probable that the members of the different families are still united to each other in some degree, and so contiuue until in the following season they disperse to become the several heads of families themselves. Like others of their tribe, these birds occasionally dust themselves in the roads, and at such times, and indeed frequently at others, may be approached quite closely. They are reckoned good eating, and great quantities are taken on the continent for the purpose. Meyer possessed one which continued for several weeks to feed a young Cuckoo, which had been placed in the same cage in which it was kept; and it did this, not with that food which it took by choice itself, but with that which was most congenial to the voracious appetite of its adopted child.

Their flight is strong, quick, and undulated, and they alight suddenly and unexpectedly, displaying the feathers of the tail at the time. They move along the ground, when feeding, by a series of very short leaps, in a horizontal position, with the breast nearly touching the ground. When perched, the tail is much deflected, hanging down as if the bird were listless, and this attitude is often continued for some time.

Their food consists of grain and other seeds, and occasionally, but rarely, of insects and worms. They consume a considerable quantity of corn in the farm-yard, clinging on to the outside of the stack, and frequently pulling out the long straws, winnowing the ears, and devouring the grain either on the spot, or at some little distance to which they have flown with it.

The note, which may heard so early as February, is usually two or more chirps, followed by a harsher one in a higher key, 'chit, chit, chirr,' and these at rather lengthened intervals. The bird generally utters it when perched on the outer or topmost spray or bough of a hedge or a tree. When a large flock is disturbed in winter from a farm-yard, and alight in a body on some neighbouring trees, a great clamour is sometimes raised, and the twittering continued for a considerable time, as if all the individuals were holding a 'conversazioné' together, and each wished to have his say on the subject, which, however interesting to them it may be, is a puzzle to the ornithologist even to guess the purport of; all on a sudden a few, first one and then another, glide down again from the trees, followed presently by the whole party; the conversation is over, the forage recommenced, the association in the mind which recalled some long since 'by gone hour' is dispelled, and conjecture as to the meaning of the language just heard is left to its previous uncertainty. Meyer relates of a tame Yellow-hammer which he had, that it displayed considerable powers of ventriloquism.

Towards the beginning of April, the associations of winter are broken up, and those of summer are made.

The nest, which is rather bulky, is usually placed either on or very near to the ground, on a bank, or sheltered by some bush, among the twigs, or in a clump of grass, or tuft of other herbage. The late William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast knew one in the middle of a field; he also relates that in the garden of a friend of his near Belfast, a pair of these birds built their nest at the edge of a gravel-walk, and brought out four young, three of which being destroyed, the nest was removed with the fourth one for greater safety to a bank a few feet distant, and the old birds still kept to it, and completed the education of their last nestling. The nest is formed of moss, small roots, small sticks, and hair, tolerably well compacted together; the finer parts of the materials being of course inside. Mr. Blackwall mentions in the first volume of the 'Zoological Journal,' his having known an instance in which, in the month of June, the female laid her eggs upon the bare ground, sat upon and hatched them; and Mr. Salmon, of Thetford, mentions in the second volume of 'The Naturalist,' old series, page 274, his having on one occasion, on the 29th. of May, 1834, found the nest at the height of seven feet from the ground, in a broom tree. Mr. Hewitson too, found one at a height of six feet from the ground in a spruce fir.

The eggs, from three to four or five, and occasionally six in number, are of a pale purple white colour, streaked and speckled with dark reddish brown; the streaks frequently ending in spots of the same colour. Some have been known of a red colour, with reddish brown streaks and lines, others quite white, others entirely of a stone-colour, and others again of a stone-colour, marbled in the usual way. In a nest in which was one egg of the ordinary size, there were two others of the Lilliputian dimensions of those of the Golden-crested Wren. The young are seldom able to fly before the second week in June, being about a fortnight after they have been hatched; they keep together at night for a short time before they finally separate. Two broods are occasionally reared in the year.

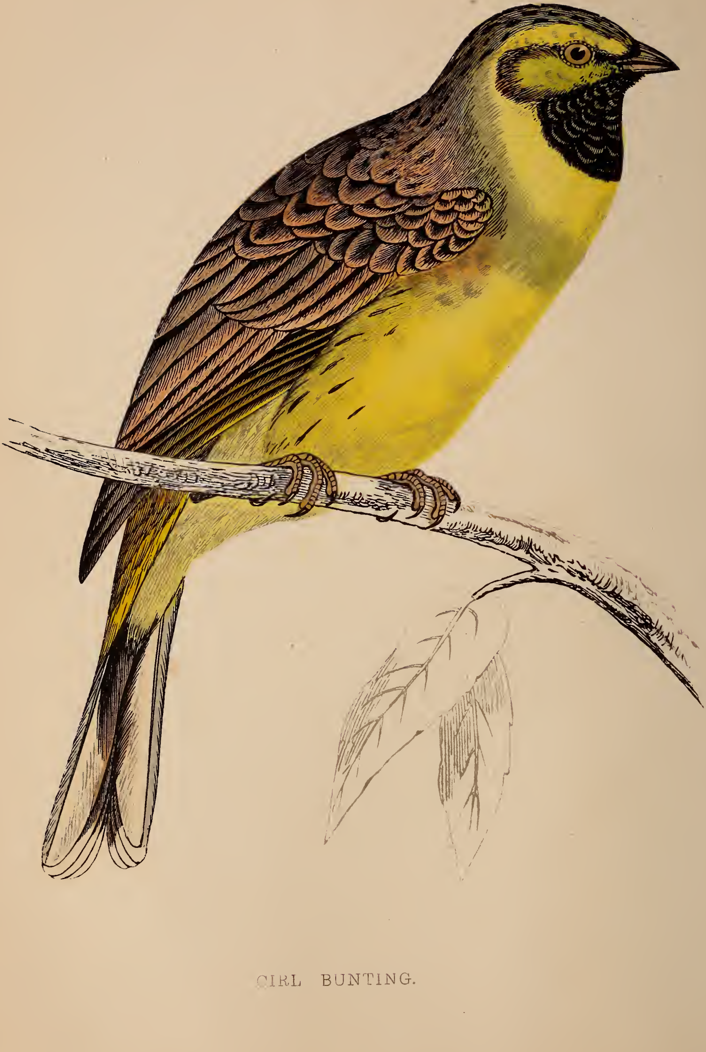
The male is very variable in the tints of his plumage, the yellow being in some much more extended than in others; this is the case with older birds, in whom also it is of a paler hue: in some the red on the breast and lower part of the back is more or less deep than in others. Weight, about seven drachms; length, seven inches, or a trifle over; bill, bluish horn-colour, the upper one with a tinge of brown; iris, dark brown; about the base of the bill the feathers are terminated with short bristles. Head on the crown and sides, bright yellow, with a few streaks of dusky black and olive brown, frequently forming a line on each side from the forehead over the eye to the back of the head; neck on the back and nape, the same; chin, throat, and breast, bright yellow, the latter clouded and more or less streaked on the sides with reddish brown and olive-colour; back, on the upper part, bright reddish brown with a tinge of yellow, yellowish orange, or yellowish green, each feather being dark brown in the centre; on the lower part it is orange brown, the feathers margined with greyish white or yellowish, according to the season.

The wings extend to the width of eleven inches; underneath they are grey; greater and lesser wing coverts, dusky black, broadly margined with rich chesnut brown and olive; primaries, dusky black, with a narrow outside edge of yellow; the first four nearly equal in length, but the first, or according to Macgillivray, the third, rather the longest, the fourth a little shorter than the third, and the fifth a quarter of an inch shorter than the fourth; secondaries and tertiaries, dusky black, broadly margined with rich chesnut brown and olive; greater and lesser under wing coverts, yellow. The tail is slightly forked, having the two middle feathers shorter than the rest, and dusky black, edged with reddish brown and tinged with yellow; the next three feathers on each side are dusky black edged with olive, and the two outer ones on each side have a broad patch of white in a slanting direction on the inner web, the rest of the feather pale brown, and the outer margin yellowish white; underneath, the tail is grey; upper tail coverts, reddish brown, the feathers edged with yellow. Legs, toes, and claws, light yellowish brown, with a tinge of red.

The female is in general much duller in colour; length, not quite seven inches; the head has much less yellow than in the male, that colour being nearly confined to the fore part of it; the neck in front assumes a tinge of dull green; the breast has the yellow much more obscured, and is merely streaked on the sides and front with yellowish red; back, on the lower part, lighter than in the male. The wings expand to the width of ten inches and three quarters; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, paler than in the male. The white spots on the side feathers of the tail are smaller in size than in the male bird, and the whole of the tail is of a lighter tint.

The young, when first fledged, are dull yellowish brown, streaked with black above, yellowish grey beneath, the breast and sides streaked with brown. The head does not assume the yellow until after the first autumnal moult, and is patched with dusky black, each feather having a streak of that colour—the older the bird the more is the yellow diffused, and less interrupted with the dusky streaks, as also deeper in tint; the sides of the head are yellowish grey. Neck on the sides, yellowish grey, on the lower part in front dull yellowish brown streaked with dusky; throat, yellow; breast, dull yellowish streaked with dusky. The streaks on the back are much broader than in the adult, and the red on its lower part is less pure, most of the feathers being streaked on the centre. The quill feathers of the wings have the yellow margins less bright; the white spots on the side feathers of the tail are smaller even than in the female; under tail coverts, dusky in the centre.

Varieties occasionally occur—one has been seen in which the head, neck, and throat were pure white, with a few spots of brown on the top of the head. Montagu mentions one he had, in which the white of the head, neck, and lower part of the back, as also the whole of the breast, were pale yellow, and some of the quill feathers, and of those on the shoulders, white. Mr. Macgillivray records another, shot in the county of Linlithgow, of a greyish white colour, the margins of the feathers pale brownish red, the bill and feet pale.



CIRL BUNTING.

# CIRL BUNTING.

FRENCH YELLOW-HAMMER. BLACK-THROATED YELLOW-HAMMER.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Emberiza cirlus,* | PENNANT. MONTAGU. BEWICK. |
| " *elcathorax,* | BECHSTEIN. |

*Emberiza*—..........? *Cirlus*—.........?

THIS neat bird is abundant in the southern parts of the European continent, and occurs also in Asia Minor; in the former in Germany, Switzerland, Thuringia, and along the shores of the Mediterranean, also in Crete and Corfu, and in France, but in the latter only, it is said, when 'en route.'

In Yorkshire, Mr. Allis has recorded one taken near York, and Dr. Neville Wood another obtained in the year 1837, at Campsall, near Doncaster; a third was shot by T. Strangwayes, Esp., at the Leases, near Bedale, in the North-Riding, on the 5th. of February, 1851; and a fourth by Richard Strangwayes, Esq., also in the month of February, near St. Agatha's Abbey, Richmond, Yorkshire; the same gentleman saw two others, both males, on the 29th. of December, 1850, on Askew Moor, near Bedale. In Berkshire, I myself procured one in the grounds of East Garston vicarage, near Lambourne: this was in the summer of the year 1826, or 1827; there were a pair, and my attention was first directed to them by the peculiarity of their note uttered from the top of an elm tree, which struck me as something different from anything I had heard before, there being a peculiar sharpness in it: I also procured their nest and two eggs. In Dorsetshire, some years afterwards, I shot another out of a flock of Yellow-hammers, in a field bordered by the sea-shore, near the village of Charmouth. In Hampshire, it has been met with in plenty, in the Isle of Wight, also near Alton and the neighbouring parish of Selborne, with which the name of WHITE will ever be associated; Thomas Bell, Esq. has known them to breed there in the year 1847. In Surrey, near Godalming, though rarely; Wiltshire and Devonshire, where it was first discovered, in considerable plenty, by Colonel Montagu, in the neighbourhood of Kingsbridge, in the winter of the year 1800. In the adjoining county of Cornwall, W. P. Cocks, Esq. records in 'The Naturalist,' vol. i, page 112, that it is not uncommon in the neighbourhood of Falmouth; it occurs also near St. Germains, Penzance, and Penryn. It is taken occasionally in the neighbourhood of London; in Sussex, near Rye, where J. B. Ellman, Esq. shot one in April, 1849; and near Chichester, where Mr. Gould observed it in abundance.

A. E. Knox, Esq. says that it affects the neighbourhood of the coast, seldom venturing many miles into the interior; that it is common during the summer months near Chichester, Bognor, Worthing, and Brighton, but is not met with on the northern side of the Downs of West Sussex. William Knapp, Esq., of Harts Cottage, Alveston, near Bristol, records in the 'Zoologist,' page 3174, that it is a constant resident in that part of Gloucestershire throughout the year, breeding there in the summer; also near Bridgewater, Glastonbury, Bath, and Bristol. In the adjoining county of Somerset he also relates that he has long known it to be abundant in the winter. In Norfolk it appears to be very rare; J. H. Gurney, Esq., of Easton, has known one killed in that county in the beginning of November, 1849. In Scotland one was procured near Edinburgh.

There is no mention of the occurrence of this bird so far north as the Orkneys, in the Natural History of those islands, before referred to, published by W. B. Baikie, Esq., M.D., and Mr. Heddle.

The following is a certain author's theory of the distribution of this species:—'The whole plumage is indeed more soft and loose, and less fitted for contending with the winds than that of the other Buntings, and much more so than that of the species which breeds in the distant north.' 'As these birds fly much in company with the Yellow Buntings in winter, they might be looked for in warmer places a little farther to the north than they have hitherto been found; though as they are in a great measure corn-land birds in their habits, the sheep-walks on the southern heights may impede their progress to the countries farther to the north, and they cannot be expected on the mountains.'

These birds may be easily kept, if brought up from the nest. They seem to be rather more shy than the Yellow Buntings, and are fond of perching on the summits of trees: as recorded of the other species, they also feign lameness, to entice strangers from a too near approach to their nest. They seem to have a partiality for elm trees, in preference to any others; but if the present mania for cutting down hedge-row timber continues, under the plea of 'agricultural improvement,' we bid fair to have neither elm trees, nor any other trees left for a bird to perch on; and what will become of the most beautiful feature of the English landscape?

They feed principally on berries, seeds, and grain, and also on caterpillars, beetles, and other insects.

The note is generally delivered from the top of a tall tree, and the female is more deficient in vocal powers than the male, though neither of them excel in this respect. They continue in full song, such as it is, until the middle or end of August, or until the period of the autumnal moult, which takes place about that time. Their monotonous lay is reiterated at brief intervals, and is uttered, at least a portion of it, while on the wing, as well as when perched.

The Cirl Buntings pair in April, and nidification commences about the beginning of May.

The nest is placed in furze or low bushes, and is usually made of dry stalks of grass and a little moss, lined with hair and small roots; some are wholly without moss or hair, and are composed entirely of the other materials, the small roots constituting the lining. R. A. Julian, Esq., Jun., has known one containing four eggs, which he met with in July, 1850, in a steep bank: it may have been a second one of the year.

The eggs are four or five in number, of a dull bluish white, distinctly streaked and speckled with dark brown: they vary much in colour and markings. The young are hatched in about a fortnight.

Male; weight, about seven drachms; length, six inches and not quite a half; bill, bluish lead-colour above, paler beneath; iris, dark brown: over it is a patch or streak of bright yellow, coming round and forming a gorget beneath the black on the throat, and a dark streak of blackish green passes, as it were through it, from the lower bill. The head has a yellow spot on its side; crown, dark olive, streaked with black on the centres of the feathers; the black feathers of the head have lighter-coloured margins in the winter, making the head yellowish grey, with the centres of the feathers black; neck on the back, sides, and front on the lower part, yellowish grey, inclining to olive green; nape, olive green; chin and throat, black with a tinge of green, below which is a crescent-shaped patch of bright yellow, the ends of which turn upwards towards the sides of the head: in the winter the black of the throat has lighter-coloured margins. Breast on the upper part, dull olive, met below by a chesnut brown band, which is widest on the sides, which are further tinged with the same, and streaked with dusky black: the lower part of the breast is dull yellow. Back, fine chesnut brown, the edge of the feathers tinged with olive, at some seasons with greyish white, and dusky in the centre and on the shafts.

The wings extend to within an inch and a half of the end of the tail; underneath they are yellowish; greater wing coverts, dusky, black in the centre, broadly margined with chesnut brown; lesser wing coverts, olive green; primaries and secondaries, dusky black, with very narrow yellowish or yellowish green edges; the second and third quill feathers are equal in length, and the longest in the wing; the first and fourth are also equal in length, but a little shorter than the second and third; the fifth an eighth of an inch shorter than the fourth; Macgillivray describes the three first as being nearly equal in length. Tertiaries, dusky black in the centre, broadly margined with chesnut brown. Tail, dusky black; the two outer feathers on each side have a patch of white on the inner webs, extending half-way from the tip, the external edge of the outer one entirely white; the centre pair are rather shorter than the others, and tinged with reddish or chesnut brown; the rest black, with very narrow light-coloured edges; upper tail coverts, yellowish olive, streaked with dusky grey; under tail coverts, pale yellow. Legs and toes, light brown tinged with pale red; claws, dusky.

In the female, over the eye is a dull yellow streak, passing down the side of the head; the head is without the black colour and the bright yellow: it is dull green, with marks of a darker shade. The crown is streaked with black; chin, yellowish brown, streaked with darker brown, as is the throat, both being without the bright yellow; breast, dull yellow, streaked with dusky black: the back is streaked with black. Its general colour is not so bright as in the male bird.

The young before the first moult have the breast pale yellow, streaked with dusky: as the bird advances in age, an olive tint appears, increasing gradually in depth of colour. Back, light brown, speckled with black.

# ORTOLAN.

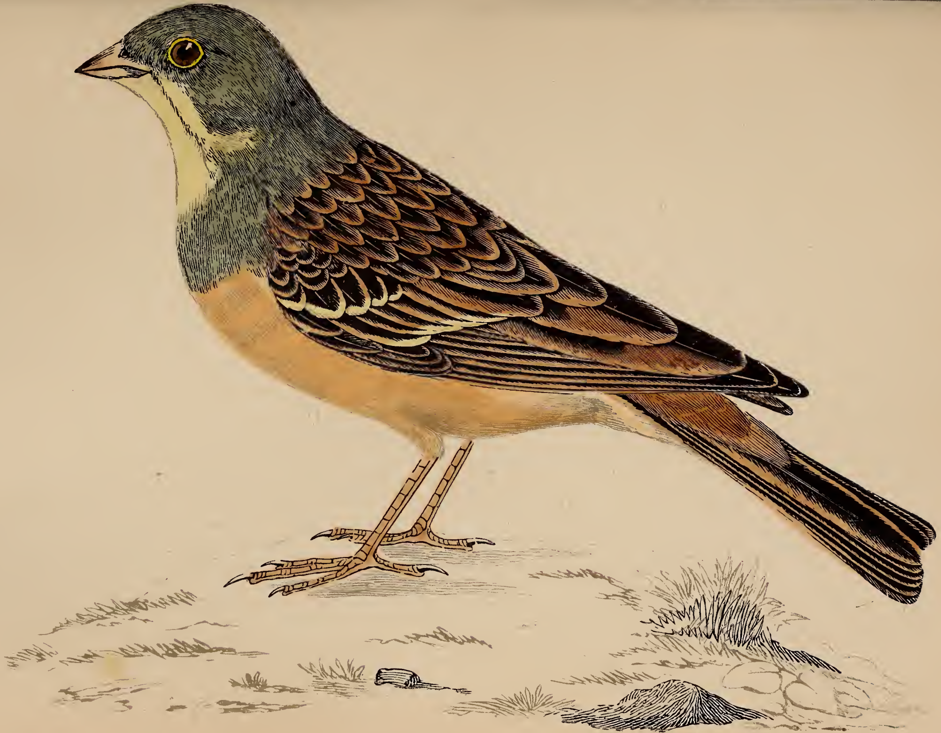
## ORTOLAN BUNTING.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Emberiza hortulana,* | Linnæus. Latham. |
| " " | Selby. Jenyns. Gould. |
| " *chlorocephala,* | Montagu. Bewick. |
| " *tunstalli,* | Latham. |

*Emberiza*—............? *Hortulana*—Of, or pertaining to gardens.
*Hortus*—A garden.

This is an abundant species in many parts of the European continent, and is found also in plenty on the northern shores of Africa, as well as in Asia Minor, Central Asia, and the East Indies. In Europe, it occurs plentifully in France, Spain, and the other southern countries that border on the Mediterranean, occasionally in Holland, and also in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, where it even produces its young; and in Lapland.

A specimen of this bird was taken off the Yorkshire coast, in the month of May, 1822, by the master of a merchant vessel; Bewick says that about the same time a pair were seen in the garden at Cherry-burn, on the banks of the Tyne. Another possessed by Marmaduke Tunstal, Esq., had been taken some time previously, in St. Mary-la-bonne Fields, London, by a bird-catcher; a third was killed near Manchester, in November, 1827; and a fourth was caught near London, in company with Yellow Buntings, by another member of the above-named fraternity. 'La mala compagnia è quella che mena uomini alla furca;' 'Bad company leads to the gallows,' says the Italian proverb, and the Ortolan Bunting is not the first that has experienced the truth of it. In the 'Account of the Birds found in Norfolk,' by John Henry Gurney and



ORTOLAN.

William Richard Fisher, Esqrs., one is mentioned as having been seen by them, which was said to have been killed near Norwich. One is also recorded by Edward Hearle Rodd, Esq., of Trebartha Hall, in the 'Zoologist,' page 3277, as having been obtained at Trescoe, one of the Scilly Islands, on or about the 8th. of October, 1851. One was shot on the 27th. of April in the present year, 1852, close to the town of Worthing, in Sussex, about a couple of hundred yards from the sea. For this information I am indebted to W. F. W. Bird, Esq., who had it from Mr. Cooper, of Radnor-Street, London.

Meyer says of these birds that they prefer the borders of woods, hedges, and fields, especially if near water; that they also visit gardens, and frequent the banks of rivulets clothed with low willows and other bushes, and districts intersected with ditches and marshy tracts; and that from their wooded retreats they visit the neighbouring fields of stubble, turnips, and millet, but are seldom seen in open meadows. He adds that they are said to shew themselves but little, in which respect they differ from the others of their kind that are found in this country, which are all of them remarkable for perching in exposed situations, where they are easily visible.

Great numbers of Ortolans are captured in nets, and preserved for the table, being esteemed a great delicacy by the foreign 'gourmands.' They are kept most easily in captivity, and being supplied abundantly with food, pass almost their whole time in feeding, so that they unwittingly hasten on their destruction by the same means as, although in a different way from, some notorious glutton, of whom it was said that he committed suicide with his teeth: it would be well if such a habit were confined to the birds, and were shared in common with them by none who rank higher in the scale of nature. Even in the time of the Romans, that is to say, in their later times, when their luxuriousness and effeminacy necessitated the destruction of the empire, they too thus committed political suicide: the Ortolan was valued on the same account that has rendered it an object of quest ever since.

It is a migratory species, Africa being its winter, and Europe its summer residence. Bechstein remarks that its migration is so exact and regular, that when one has been seen in a particular spot, especially in the spring, it is sure to be found there the following year at the same time. This is, however, equally the case with many other migratory birds, as well as with the one at present before us. The rule is, I think, one way, although there may be exceptions to it.

The food of this bird consists of grain and seeds, as also of insects and their larvæ, on which latter the young are principally fed, as is the case with other birds of allied kinds.

The monotonous note of this species is almost incessantly repeated by the male bird during the pairing season. As a cage bird, Bechstein describes its song as full and clear.

The Ortolan Bunting begins to build early in May.

The nest is placed in corn-fields, and adapted to some hollow in the ground, or the latter possibly to it; Selby adds thickets and low hedges as places of its nidification also. It is formed of dry grass and small roots, thickly lined with the finer portions of the latter; in some the inside is finished with a few hairs.

The eggs are four or five, sometimes, though rarely, six in number: they vary much in markings.

Male; length, six inches and a quarter; bill, reddish brown: from its lower corner descends a short streak of yellow, between which and the yellow of the chin is a narrow band of greenish grey. Iris, brown; head on the crown and sides, greenish grey, the shafts of the feathers dark coloured; neck on the back, the same; nape, the same; chin, throat, and breast on the upper part, yellowish green, the remainder of the latter is reddish buff, the feathers tipped with greyish white; back on the upper part, rich reddish brown, or yellowish brown, with a tinge of green on the edges of the feathers, but almost black in the middle; on the lower part it is reddish, or yellowish brown.

The wings have the first three feathers nearly equal in length and the longest in the wing, the fourth nearly a quarter of an inch shorter than the third; greater and lesser wing coverts, dusky black, with broad rufous brown margins, which at some seasons are yellowish white; primaries, dusky black, narrowly edged with rufous brown, at some seasons with yellowish white; secondaries, dusky black, also edged with rufous brown; tertiaries, dusky black, with broad rufous brown margins. Tail, dusky black, the centre feathers tinted with reddish, and their margins paler; the two outer feathers on each side with a patch of white on the inner web; upper tail coverts, reddish or yellowish brown; under tail coverts, pale reddish buff. Legs and toes, pale brown, with a tinge of red: the hind claw is not much curved.

The female is generally of a duller hue, and is also rather smaller in size; the colour of the head is more mixed with grey, and streaked with dark brown. The breast on the upper part is spotted with dark brown, and the buff on the lower part is less bright in colour.

Young birds of the year resemble the female.

M. Temminck and M. Viellot speak of different varieties of this bird. The latter enumerates six different ones: one of them has the head and neck green. Some, he says, are occasionally met with entirely white, and others partially so; others, again, of a uniform blackish brown, but this the result of their being fed on hemp seed when kept in confinement.

# CHAFFINCH.

SHILFA. SCOBBY. SHELLY. SKELLY.
SHELL-APPLE. BEECH-FINCH. TWINK. SPINK. PINK.

*Fringilla cœlebs*, PENNANT. MONTAGU. BEWICK.

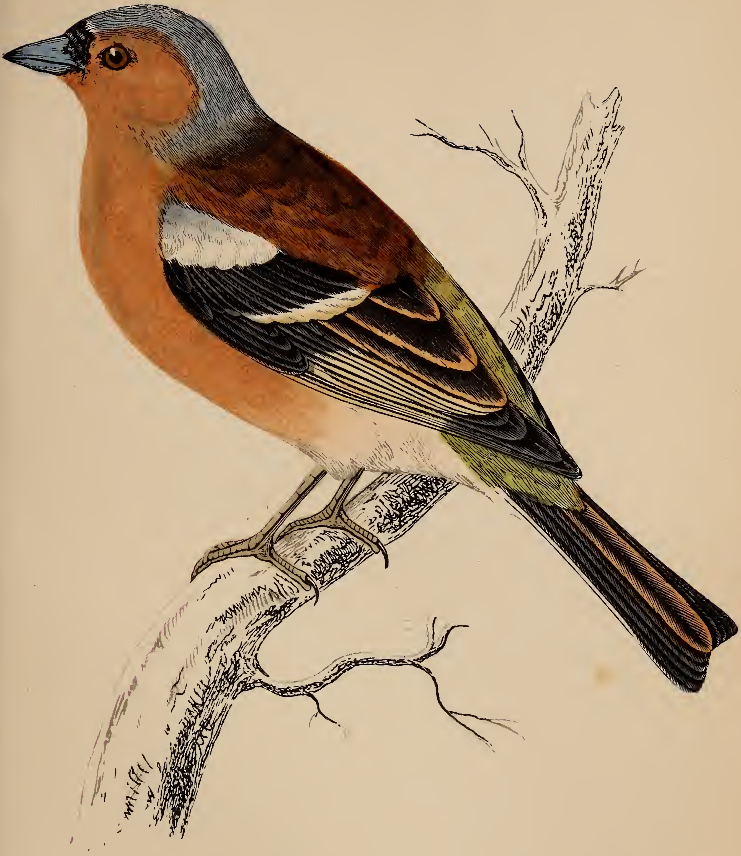
*Fringilla*, also *Frigilla*—A Chaffinch. *Cœlebs*—A Bachelor.

THIS bird is generally distributed over the European continent, being migratory in those countries which are colder, and stationary in those which are warmer. It is found from the Levant to the Azores, and from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden to the 'Banks of the Blue Moselle,' and all the other regions of the 'sunny south.' It occurs also on the northern shores of Africa.

In this country it is one of our most common species, and the male one of the handsomest birds that we have, as will appear from the description.

In the Orkney Islands it is very common in winter and spring, and most likely breeds there, as several remain throughout the summer. Large flocks occasionally appear in October, especially after easterly gales.

The Chaffinch is with us in some degree migratory, and is remarkable for the separation, in some parts of the country, of the males and females, during the winter months, and their collection at that season into separate flocks. Mr. Selby, speaking of this singular habit says, that in the county of Northumberland, and in Scotland, their separation takes place about the month of November; and that from that period till the return of spring, few females are to be seen, and those few always in distinct societies. The males remain, and are met with, during the winter, in immense flocks, feeding with



CHAFFINCH.

other granivorous birds in the stubble lands as long as the weather continues mild and the ground free from snow; resorting, upon the approach of winter, to farm-yards and other places of refuge and supply. He adds that it has been noticed by several authors that the arrival of the males, in a number of our summer visitants, precedes that of the females by many days; a fact from which we might infer that in such species a similar separation exists between the males and the females before their migration. When at school, at Bromsgrove, in Worcestershire, I noticed this fact, I mean as regards the Chaffinch, myself. There the hen birds used to be met with in large flocks in the winter months, and also, I am nearly certain, the male birds likewise in flocks by themselves. I am inclined to think that this is most the case in severe winters.

The Rev. Gilbert White, in his 'Natural History of Selborne,' Hampshire, remarked the same thing, the large flocks to be met with in hard weather being almost, but not quite, exclusively composed of females. Linnæus, in his 'Fauna of Sweden,' records his observation of the like circumstance there, and says that the female Chaffinches migrate from that country in the winter, but that the males do not. Hence the assignment by him to this species of its specific Latin name, equivalent to our Bachelor.

With the advance of spring, however, our bird becomes 'Cælebs in search of a wife;' nor does he seek in vain, for in every lane in the country that is lined with trees, a 'happy pair' are to be seen; the absurdities of Malthus and Miss Martineau—to whom I wish no worse than that she may remain to the end of her days in 'Single Blessedness'—weighing not a feather in the scale with them against the Divine Edict which Nature publishes to them, 'Encrease and multiply.' With regard, however, to the observations of Linnæus, Professor Nillson, of Sweden, says that although but few Chaffinches remain in that country during winter, they are not males only. But, doubtless, the fact as stated by the former great author, must still remain, at all events to some degree, the same as when he recorded it, and this would partially account for the enlarged numbers of females to be seen with us in winter in the flocks already spoken of.

In autumn these birds become gregarious, frequenting hedge-rows and stubble fields, where they unite with companions of various other species, whose similar pursuits lead them to the like localities. Still later on in the year they assemble in stack-yards, and are to be met with in every direction, searching for food, in orchards, gardens, and fields by hedge-row sides, along open roads, in copses and woods and near houses. Towards the end of March the flocks break up, and in April preparations for an addition of family are made. Mr. Knapp, the author of the 'Journal of a Naturalist,' says that in Gloucestershire no separation of the kind above spoken of takes place in the winter.

The Chaffinch is considered to act the useful part of a sentinel for other birds, by uttering a note of alarm, and so giving them timely notice of approaching danger. No bird is also more ready to join with others in mobbing any unwelcome intruder, whether in the shape of cat or weasel, owl or cuckoo; nor is any more neat in personal characteristics. Even in the depth of winter, when the pools are covered with ice, he may be seen washing in some place that affords a lavatory to him, and then he flies off to some neighbouring branch, where he preens and dries his feathers. It is a sprightly species, and confident in behaviour, allowing often the very near advance of observers or passers by, without exhibiting much alarm. The male bird, when not at rest, usually raises the feathers of the head to a trifling extent in the way of a crest.

Their flight, which on occasion is protracted, is rather rapid and somewhat undulated, being performed by quickly-repeated flappings, with short intervals of cessation. Their movement from the ground to a tree, when disturbed by your too near approach, is singularly quick—an upward dart, executed with scarce any apparent effort. They alight also in an abrupt manner, and when on the ground proceed by a succession of very short leaps. They roost at night in thick hedge-rows, as also among evergreens in plantations and shrubberies.

The food of the Chaffinch consists of grain, seeds, and the tender leaves of young plants, as also of insects; and these latter it may sometimes, especially in the early months of the spring, be seen hawking after for a little way, somewhat after the manner of the Flycatcher. I copy the following pleasing and complete account of this part of the Natural History of our present subject, from a paper in the 'Zoologist,' pages 297-298, by Archibald Hepburn, Esq.; only first observing that these birds also swallow small round smooth grains of gravel, to aid the process of digestion:—'The ploughing of our stubble-fields is generally finished about the end of December. Those which have been sown out with grass seeds may still afford a slight supply of food, but it is then that the great body of Chaffinches seek shelter near the homestead, gleaning their food in the cattle-yards, at the barn-door, on the sides and round about the stacks. Here, as in the fields, they are distinguished for their watchfulness, and well do the little birds know the import of their warning note. The Dipper may be heard by the mountain stream the livelong year, and the bold Missel Thrush may stir the woodlands in sunny hours, even in mid-winter; here the Robin and the Wren are silent during the dead season, and the Chaffinch is the leader of the vernal chorus.

When the oats are sown in March, many small flocks betake themselves to the fields, feeding on the uncovered grains, and such small seeds as may be turned up in the course of tillage. Even our sheltered woods on the banks of Whittingham-Water are seldom altogether deserted; for the autumn leaves, when swept aside by the blast, seem to disclose a multitude of small seeds congenial to their taste. As the season advances, these flocks gradually disperse, and none remain about the farm-yards but such as breed in the garden and neighbouring hedge-rows; and they may daily be seen foraging for a supply of their winter fare, even in midsummer, but desist entirely from pilfering from the sides of the stacks; even the new-fledged young partake of such food. During the summer months, insects and their larvæ constitute their chief support, perhaps I might almost say, in many cases, their only support, for they are often found in the loneliest places in woods and plantations.

The first annoyance they give to the farmer is by destroying his early crops of radishes, turnips, and onions, in the garden, besides making sad havoc with his polyanthuses and auriculas; but a few barn-door fowls' feathers inserted into a piece of cork, and allowed to dangle in the wind over the beds, are sure to drive away our merry little songster, who does our apple, pear, and apricot trees good service, when infested by leaf-rolling caterpillars, besides other insect foes of which we take no note. He is also a very useful auxiliary to the farmer, as well as to the gardener, by destroying a multitude of small seeds, amongst which I may enumerate those of chickweed, groundsel, bulbous and hairy crowfoot. He is one of the most determined of all the plunderers of our turnip-seed; and I see that those who practice this branch of husbandry sustain considerable loss, notwithstanding that a watch is daily set.

When our grain crops ripen in August and September, the Chaffinches which haunted the recesses of woods and plantations flock to the borders, and unless the farmer is attentive to such matters, as from their small size they cannot be perceived at a distance, their depredations are often carried on with impunity. The trees around our dwellings are also the rendezvous of parties of plunderers, who sometimes join the Sparrows, but oftener keep together, and feed amongst the standing corn, at a greater distance from the hedge-row than the latter even venture. After the wheat is cut and placed in shocks, and whilst yet in a soft state, I have observed the Chaffinch deprive each grain of its outside coat previously to swallowing it. Although they always prefer feeding in the neighbourhood of trees or bushes, yet as the season advances, they are compelled to haunt more exposed situations. Of the cereal grasses, wheat and oats are their favourites, barley—the only other species cultivated in these parts—being held in less esteem."

There is something very cheerful in the common note of the Chaffinch, and, as harbinging the return of spring, it is always hailed with welcome by the observer of the sights and sounds of the country. It is heard so soon as the beginning of February, or even the end of January, ordinarily resembling the monosyllables 'twink, twink,' and afterwards 'tweet, tweet, tweet, tweet.'

This is the more usual number of repetitions, but the chirp is sometimes half as long again, and sometimes only half as long. An addition is made to it at its re-commencement for the season, somewhat resembling the syllables 'churr-ee.' Its song has but little variety, and is short, but mellow, and not altogether devoid of melody. At first it is only heard about the middle of the day, but as the season advances it is more prolonged, though never so late, as never is it either commenced so early, as that of many other birds. Discontinued during the busy part of the summer, it is resumed, though at first imperfectly, the end of July or beginning of August. The young males then essay the song their fathers have sung before them, but it requires some practice before they attain to their specific amount of excellence.

Two broods are hatched in the year. The first is usually abroad by the beginning or middle of May; the second by the end of July.

The nest of the Chaffinch is built on fruit or other trees in orchards and gardens, in the fields and hedges, and in the latter themselves also, occasionally, against a wall. The late Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, has recorded one which was placed in a whin bush; and another, which came under the observation of Mr. J. R. Garrett, which was built against the stem of a pine tree, and rested on one of the branches, to which it was bound with a piece of fine whip-cord: this was taken once round the branch and its ends were firmly interwoven in the materials of the nest. It is commonly placed from six to twelve feet from the ground—sometimes higher; it is rarely completed before the end of April. While it is being fabricated, the birds shew great disquietude at the approach of any one, by continued notes of alarm, and actions depictive of uneasiness. The nest of one pair has been known to have been built in a bean rick. The male bird assists in the work of incubation. The hen bird when sitting is strongly tenacious of her place, and is not easily frightened from it, sometimes allowing herself to be captured sooner than forsake her charge; in one instance she has been found frozen to death at her post.

The nest is truly a beautiful piece of workmanship, compact and neat in the highest degree. It is usually so well adapted to the colour of the place where it is built, as to elude detection from any chance passer by—close scrutiny is required to discover it. It is therefore variously made, according to the nature of the elements of construction at hand. Some are built of grasses, stalks of plants, and small roots, compacted with the scales of bark and wool, and lined with hair, with perhaps a few feathers; the outside being entirely covered with tree moss and lichens, taken from the tree itself in which it is placed; the assimilation being thus rendered complete. Others are without any wool, its place being supplied by thistle-down and spider-cots. In fact the bird accommodates itself to circumstances, or rather circumstances to its requirements, using such materials as are at hand. The upper edge of the nest is generally very neatly woven with slender straws, and the width of the open part is often not more than an inch and a half, but usually an inch and three quarters; the whole is firmly fixed between the branches to which some of its component parts are attached for the purpose.

In the neighbourhood of Belfast, where there are 'branches' of the cotton manufacture, these birds use that material in the construction of their nests; and in answer to the objection that its conspicuous colour would betray the presence of the nest, and not accord with the theory that birds assimilate the outward appearance of their structures to surrounding objects, it was replied, says Mr. Thompson, that, on the contrary, the use of cotton in that locality might rather be considered as rendering the nest more difficult of detection, as the road-side hedges and neighbouring trees were always dotted with tufts of it.

A correspondent in the 'Field Naturalist's Magazine' gives an account of a pair of Chaffinches which built in a shrub; so close to the window of his sitting-room, that he was enabled to be a close observer of their 'modus operandi,' and its results. The foundation of the nest was laid on the 12th. of April; the female alone worked at the structure, and after unwearied diligence, completed her task in three weeks. Think of this, bird-nesters, and leave the artist the product of her toil; take gently out, if you will, an egg or two for your collection, but leave her some to gladden her maternal heart! The first egg, he continues, was laid on the 2nd. of May; four others were subsequently added, and the whole five were hatched on the 15th. of that month. During the whole of the time of incubation, neither the curiosity of the observer, nor constant observation from the opened window disturbed the parent bird from her care, but she sat most patiently and courageously. The male bird often visited his partner, but it was not discovered whether he ever brought her food. Bewick says that the male bird is sedulously attentive to the female during the time of incubation.

Archibald Hepburn, Esq. writes as follows in the 'Zoologist,' pages 572-3, dating from Whittingham, March 16th., 1844: —'About the end of April the first nest is built, and is usually composed of the following materials—moss, lichens, grass, and pieces of thread; and lined with feathers, wool and hair; and out of these simple materials a most beautiful fabric is constructed. It is placed in a variety of trees and bushes—the hawthorn hedge is a great favourite; and two wall pear trees in our garden are almost annually tenanted. One of the oldest circumstances that I can recollect about birds is, that a pair of Chaffinches annually built their nest in an old pear tree till it was cut down about five years ago; and also that the nest was annually placed upon a branch overhanging a walk, so low that the whole was often struck by the heads of passengers.

When built in wall fruit trees, the followed method is pursued:—A quantity of materials is deposited between the branch and the wall, the end of which is laid upon a branch, and this serves for a foundation. Sometimes it is placed amongst the spurs, and at other times it is simply shaded by a few leaves, and when finished, the lining only intervenes between the sitting bird and the wall: a few days are occupied in building the nest, then four or five eggs are deposited, one each day. The female, like most birds, sits eleven or twelve days, and in as many more the young are fledged. When engaged in constructing their nest, especially when it is in a wood, both birds, by their cries and gestures, seek to entice an intruder from the neighbourhood, by flitting about his path, and after he has removed to a distance, they again return to the place. This same species of guile is practised by the male while his mate is sitting, The young follow their parents for some days, and are very garrulous for food. It is during the period when occupied in supplying the wants of his family, that the active habits of the bird are displayed to the greatest advantage, and all his bodily energies are called into play.'

With reference to the structure of the nidification of our present subject, Mr. Hewitson well observes upon its extreme elegance and beauty. He says, 'Few can have passed through life so unobservant as not to have seen, and in seeing to have admired the nest of the Chaffinch. No one whose heart is touched by the beauties of nature, can have examined this exquisite structure without uttering some exclamation of wonder and delight, and of comparing it, like the poet, with all that is most admirable in art and of man's invention.

Amongst the tiny architects of the feathered race, there are few that can compete with the Chaffinch. Its nest is not only perfect in its inward arrangements, but is tastefully ornamented on the outside as well, with materials such as nature can alone employ. In its outward decoration some individuals employ much more taste than others, but all seem to think it indispensable to deck the green walls of their dwellings with gems of white; and when, in the neighbourhood of a town, the beautiful white lichens which are used for that purpose are obscured and blackened by the smoke of our chimneys, they have recourse to something else.'

He adds that a nest of the Chaffinch, which was built in an old willow tree, in a garden where no white lichens could be found, was ornamented with fragments of white paper. 'The Chaffinch builds its nest in many different situations, preferring old moss-grown apple or crab trees, and whitethorn bushes. There is, however, scarcely a low tree, upon the branches of which the nest may not be sometimes found, occasionally upon the flat bough of a spruce fir, in hollies, and often in hedges. I have found one on the top of a dead stake fence. The nest is composed chiefly of moss, so worked and matted together with wool that it is no easy matter to pull it into pieces as small as those of which it was first formed; inside of this is a very thick lining of dry grass, wool, feathers, thistle-down, and hair, in succession."

Mr. Knapp, the author of the 'Journal of a Naturalist,' says, 'I have observed these birds, in very hot seasons, to wet their eggs, by discharging moisture from their bills upon them, or at least perform an operation that appeared to be so.'

The old birds continue together throughout the summer, and as the broods become able to associate with their parents, they may be found in small parties, which again further unite together as winter advances.

The eggs are four or five in number, of a short oval form, and of a dull bluish green colour, clouded with dull red, often blended together into one tint. They are slightly streaked and somewhat spotted irregularly over their whole surface with dark dull well-defined red spots. Some have been found of a uniform dull blue, without any spots.

Male; length, about six inches, or from that to six and a half, or more; bill, clear bluish, tipped with black, with a tinge of purple red on the lower surface of the under mandible—the feathers over the base of the under bill are black; the base becomes whitish after the autumnal moult; iris, hazel. Forehead, black, sides of the head dull pink, with a tinge of rufous; crown, neck on the sides, and nape, fine bluish lead-colour; chin, throat, and breast, on its upper part, dull pink, with a tinge of rufous; the latter on its lower part fades off into dull white, with a very faint tinge of reddish. Back, chesnut brown, the feathers become margined with yellowish grey in the winter, olive colour on the lower part.

The wings expand to the width of eleven inches and a half; greater wing coverts, black at the base, broadly tipped with yellowish white, forming a conspicuous bar; some of the lesser wing coverts are fine bluish lead-colour, others white, and others tipped with white, forming another conspicuous bar. The three first primaries are brownish black, edged with yellowish or buff white on the outer web; the remainder are white at the base, forming a distinct spot, with part of their inner webs white, and the inner half of the outer webs margined with pale yellow. The first quill feather is about an eighth of an inch shorter than the second, third, and fourth, which are nearly equal, and the longest in the wing, the third rather the longest of the three; the fifth is rather shorter than the first. Secondaries, as some of the primaries, namely, white at the base, with part of their inner webs white, and the inner half of the outer webs margined with pale yellow; tertiaries, the same, but more broadly margined with the pale yellow; larger and lesser under wing coverts, greyish white. The tail has the two middle feathers lead-colour, tinged with olive, blackish along the shafts, and the other next ones black, the outside one on each side being obliquely marked with white on the inner web, and the whole, or part of the outer web is of that colour; the next feather is also tipped with a triangular-shaped patch of white on the inner web; the tail is very slightly forked; upper tail coverts, lead-colour, tinged with olive; under tail coverts, dull white, as the lower part of the breast. Legs, toes, and claws, dusky reddish or brown.

After the autumnal moult, the colours of the feathers are much obscured, losing their brightness, and the edges wear away, but by the beginning of April, or even so early as January, the black of the forehead becomes nearly pure, the greyish blue of the head nearly unmixed, and the breast brighter in tint.

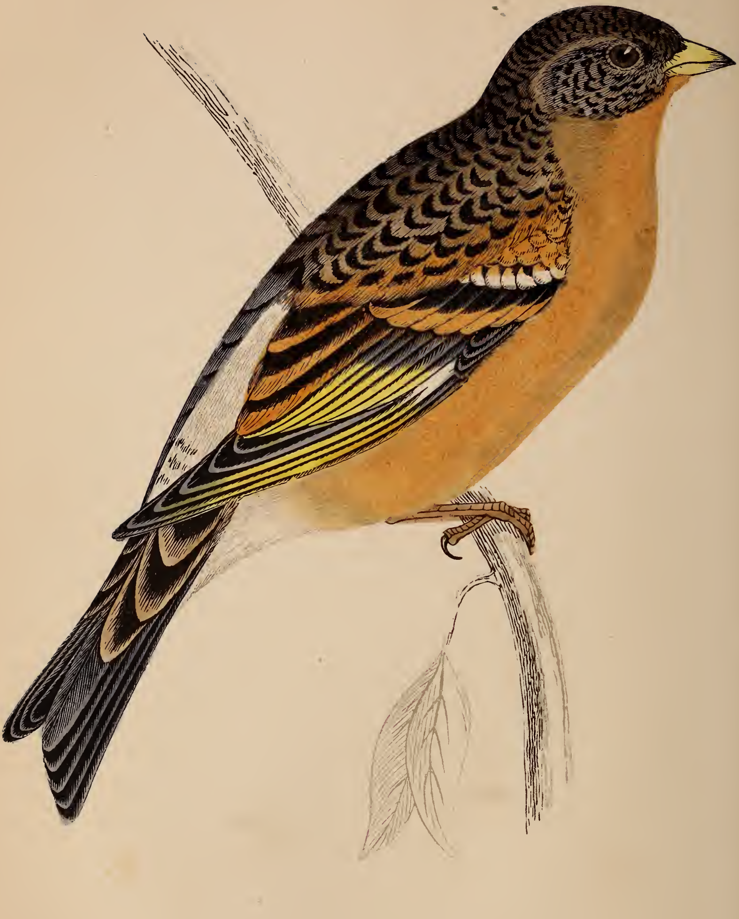
Female; length, from about five inches and three quarters to six inches, or six and a quarter; bill, brownish dull pale red colour; iris, as in the male. Head on the crown, greyish olive, paler on the central part; on the sides it is olive; chin, throat, and breast, brownish white, or dull fawn-colour, with a very faint tinge of red. Back, dull light greyish brown on the upper part, and on the lower part pale dull yellowish green. The wings, which extend to the width of ten inches, have the white bars and spots as in the male, but less conspicuous. The primaries and secondaries have yellow edges also as in the male, and the black is changed for deep brown; under tail coverts, nearly white.

The young male resembles the female until after the autumnal moult, when he begins gradully to assume his future distinctive colours; until then the tints are paler, and the green on the lower part of the back is wanting.

In some specimens of the Chaffinch the throat and breast are of a lighter or deeper red, the quill feathers of the wing more or less black, and the white bands on the wings more or less tinged with yellow.

A curious variety of this species is recorded in the 'Zoologist, page 1955, by J. H. Gurney and William Richard Fisher, Esqrs., as having been killed on the 30th. of August, in the year 1847. The following is their account and description of it:—The bird is a young male, the ground colour of its plumage is white, but pervaded throughout with a delicate canary yellow colour. This tint is strongest on the back, especially on the lower part, on the edges of the quill feathers of the wings and of the tail feathers. The eyes are of the natural colour. It was shot at Brooke, in the county of Norfolk, by H. K. Thompson, Esq. Mr. G. B. Clarke also records another in 'The Naturalist,' vol. i, page 142, which was nearly white, there being but a few coloured feathers in it. It was shot at Froxfield, near Woburn, Bedfordshire.

The late William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, gives an account of another, in his valuable 'Natural History of Ireland,' of which he says that it was of the full adult size of the Chaffinch in every measurement, and singularly and beautifully marked, the prevailing colour of its plumage being pure white, but the head tinted with yellow, and the centre of the back rich yellow, like that of the Canary; the wing coverts and upper tail coverts being also delicately tinged with that colour. It had a few of the ordinary blackish grey and brown feathers of the Chaffinch, as follows:—one or two on the head, some on the back, and some, very few, on the wings and tail, but altogether inconspicuous. The primaries and the tail feathers, as well as their shafts, were pure white, and the whole plumage partook as much of, or more than, I should be inclined to say from his description, that of the Canary, as of that of the Chaffinch. He also relates that Mr. J. V. Stewart met with a white one; and, further, that in May, 1844, a pair were found, just after leaving the nest, in the garden of John Legge, Esq., of Glynn Park, near Carrickfergus, which were united together after the manner of the 'Siamese Twins.'



MOUNTAIN FINCH.

# MOUNTAIN FINCH.

BRAMBLING. BRAMBLE FINCH. LULEAN FINCH.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Fringilla montifringilla,* | PENNANT. MONTAGU. |
| " *lulensis,* | GMELIN. |

*Fringilla,* also *Frigilla*—A Chaffinch. *Montifringilla. Mons*—A mountain. *Fringilla*—A Chaffinch, or bird of the Finch kind.

THIS handsome species is a native of some of the northern parts of the European continent, being to be met with in Norway, Sweden, Lapland, and Denmark; and on the other hand, even so far south as Italy, and doubtless occasionally in others of the neighbouring countries, 'where the blue waters roll' of the tideless Mediterranean; from the 'Pillars of Hercules,' to the 'Holy Land' of Palestine,' for it is stated to occur also in Asia, in Asia Minor, and even in Japan; the latter according to M. Temminck. In Thuringia vast flocks are said to assemble in the beech forests.

In this country it is found of course most numerously in the north, but also not very unfrequently even in the extreme south—in Dorsetshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall. Edward Hearle Rodd, Esq., of Trebartha Hall, sent Mr. Yarrell word of a pair which were killed near the Land's End, in the winter of the year 1836. Mr. George B. Clarke, of Woburn, Bedfordshire, informs me that in some winters great numbers are seen in the Park of Woburn Abbey, the seat of His Grace the Duke of Bedford, which they frequent to feed on the beech-mast there. Two or three were seen near Pool Cottage, Dewchurch, Herefordshire, in 1845: immense flocks were met with near Farnham, Surrey, in the winter of 1842. In Sussex, A. E. Knox, Esq. says that they are plentiful during protracted snow and frost, and that some are captured every winter on the Downs in nets. In

Gloucestershire a few have been met with near Cheltenham; and some in Warwickshire near Leamington. At Lilford, Northamptonshire, the Hon. Thomas Littleton Powys has once met with it, and the Rev. R. P. Alington saw several some years since, near Swinhope, Lincolnshire.

In Scotland, and also in various parts of Ireland, it is met with, and in some winters has been seen in very large flocks in different counties. The character of the season seems to be the cause that regulates its movements, at least in any numbers. In severe ones, very many have accordingly been discovered in places where few, if any, had ever been seen before. A day or two before the very great snow-storm that occurred in the beginning of January, 1827, one of these birds alighted on the "Chieftain" steam-packet, on the passage between Liverpool and Belfast.

In the Orkney Islands, the only instance of its being noted appears to be one which occurred at Lopness, in Sanday, May 19th., 1839.

Its habitat is in the wild and mountainous districts, from whence its specific name, both scientific and vernacular.

The Mountain Finch is a migratory species, being with us as a winter visitor only. The dates of its appearance are irregular, varying probably according to the state of the weather in the countries from which they have migrated. Bewick mentions their having been seen on the hills in the county of Cumberland, so early as the middle of August; but it is at least possible that these might have been birds which had been bred in that county the same summer, for it would appear that some may do so, coupling the fact just stated with the circumstance mentioned in 'Loudon's Magazine of Natural History,' for the year 1835, that on the 6th. of May in that year, one was shot in a fir plantation about four miles east of York. Meyer also records two or three instances in which he believed that he saw the species in summer. The usual time however of its arrival in Scotland is the end of the month of October, or beginning of November; the former being the date in the northern parts, the latter in the more southern. In mild winters few, if any, advance into England; while in severe weather they are driven forwards in great numbers. They depart again in March.

These birds go in flocks in winter, and Pennant mentions that he received eighteen from Kent, which had been all killed at one shot. Sometimes they are observed mixed with other species of graminivorous birds, and at other times they have been seen in large numbers by themselves. They are said to be good to eat, but to have a bitter taste. When alarmed, they betake themselves to trees, as do the other birds of the family to which they belong. They seem to be very easily reconciled to confinement, but the late William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, relates that a pair which were kept in a large cage in a greenhouse with some other birds, made such a noise throughout moonlight nights as to disturb the family, and consequently they had to be removed to another place. Bewick says, quoting Buffon, that in France they appear sometimes in immense numbers, and that in one year they were so numerous that more than six hundred dozen were killed each night during the greater part of the winter. It is not said, however, whether this was in one locality, or the total produce of the whole country, which latter again it would be next to impossible even to arrive at a proximate guess at, as no previous preparation would have been made for taking a 'census' of these unexpected strangers. I should rather therefore imagine that they have to be set down as the results of the 'long bow,' rather than of the gun or the net.

Their flight is rapid and undulated. They roost in trees, seeming to give a preference to plantations of fir and larch.

The food of this species consists of grain, the seeds of the grasses and other plants, and beech-mast. It forages in the fields, in company with birds of other species, until driven by stress of weather and the absence of supply to the neighbourhood of the homestead, where it picks up anything it can meet with on the ground, but it does not seem to pilfer from the stacks.

Its note is ordinarily a single monotonous chirp, resembling the syllable 'tweet,' but in the spring of the year it has a pleasing warble—a succession of low notes, ended by a more hoarse and protracted one. Meyer likens it to the words 'chip-u-way.'

The nest is placed in lofty fir and other trees, is formed of moss, and lined with wool and feathers. R. Dashwood, Esq., of Beccles, Suffolk, had these birds lay, in two instances, in the year 1839; and in the latter the eggs were hatched. His aviary is a large one, enclosing a considerable space of ground, and is surrounded with ivy, and planted inside with shrubs. If birds are to be kept in confinement at all, some such place is the only one in which they should be confined. The nest having been completed four days, the first egg was laid on the 16th. of June in the just-named year, and another was laid each day until the 21st., when they were removed. The nest was composed of moss, wool, and dry grass, and lined with hair; and these materials were selected from a variety which the birds had the option of making use of. The foundations, which were large, were worked in among the stalks of the ivy leaves.

'In the latter part of July, in the same year,' says Mr. Dashwood, writing to Mr. Hewitson, 'another pair of Bramblings built, placing their nest on the ground, close to a shrub or a tuft of grass. The outside of the nest was made of moss, and it was lined with hair. From this nest I removed four eggs on the 1st. of August. On the 17th. of June, 1840, they laid again, having built in the ivy. This nest I did not disturb, and although the eggs were hatched, they did not succeed in rearing the young ones.'

In the 'Account of the Birds found in Norfolk,' presently to be again referred to regarding our present subject, the authors mention the following instance, or rather instances, of these birds nesting in confinement, communicated to them by a gentleman residing near Norwich. A pair of Bramblings built a nest in an aviary in the last week of the month of June, 1842, and two eggs were laid, both of which were removed, and found to be good. In June, 1843, the same birds again nested, and the female laid two eggs, and these having been removed, they formed a second nest in a different spot, in which four eggs were deposited. The last nest, together with the eggs, was accidentally destroyed, and it was not ascertained whether the eggs laid during the year were good or not.

The eggs are four or five in number, white, spotted with yellowish brown.

Male; length, six inches and a quarter, to six and three quarters; the upper bill is dusky, the point bluish black; the under bill, dusky yellowish white, with the point bluish black: in the spring and summer it is extremely dark lead-coloured. Iris brown. Head on the crown and sides, neck on the back, and nape, in the winter, rich mottled grey and black, each feather being black at the base, and grey at the tip: in the spring these brown tips disappear, leaving the white of these parts of a fine velvet black, which the bird retains until the next autumnal moult. Chin, throat, and breast on its upper part, rich orange fawn-colour; the latter is white, or yellowish white on its lower part, and on the sides it is varied with blackish spots and light brown. Back on the upper part, as the head and nape, but the grey edges of the feathers exchanged for rust-colour; on the lower part white.

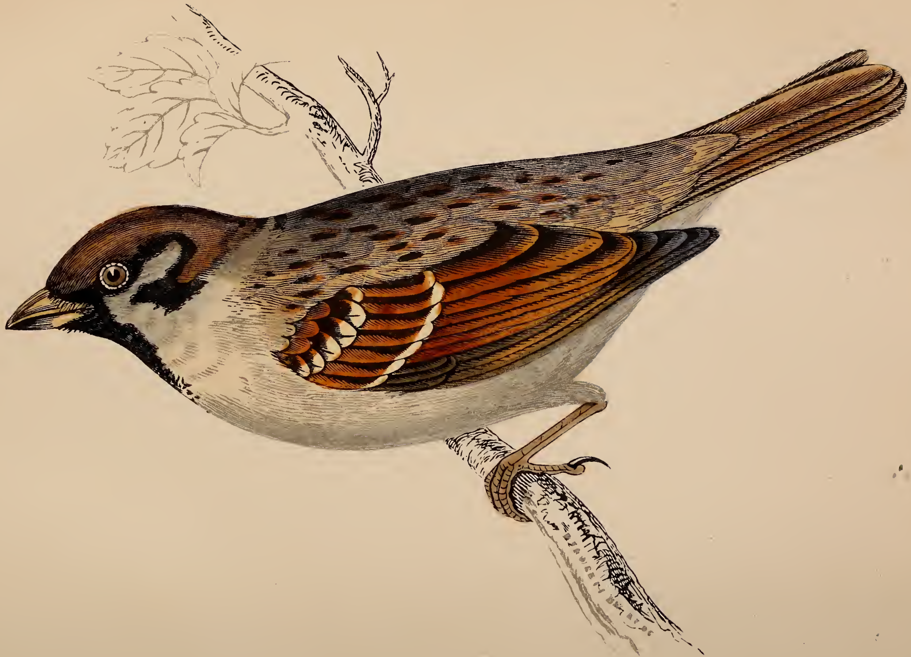
The wings extend to the width of about ten inches and a half; greater wing coverts, jet black, tipped with orange fawn-colour; lesser wing coverts, rich orange fawn-colour, the feathers tipped with white; primaries, black, some of them with narrow light-coloured outside edges, forming an oblique bar when the wing is closed, and with a white spot at the base; the first three wing feathers are nearly equal in length and the longest in the wing, the third being rather longer than the others, and the fourth feather is about an eighth shorter than the third; secondaries, edged with orange fawn-colour or reddish orange; tertiaries, black, broadly edged with orange fawn-colour, or reddish orange. The larger under wing coverts have a small tuft of elongated feathers, and the lesser under wing coverts are bright yellow. Tail, black, the feathers edged with buff white, the outer feather on each side with a patch of dull white on the inner web; the middle pair of feathers are shorter by about, but not quite, half an inch than the rest, making the tail forked; upper tail coverts black, the feathers having grey borders; under tail coverts, white, or yellowish white; legs, toes, and claws, rather light brown.

The female is said by some to be considerably, and by others only slightly, less in size than the male. Length, about six inches; in the winter plumage there is over the eye a streak of brownish black; it has less of the black colour on the crown of the head, which is therefore more brown coloured, the centres of the feathers being brownish black; and on the sides it is dull brownish grey, with two dark lines dividing the sides of the neck from the nape. Neck on the back and sides, and nape, dull brownish grey, with two longitudinal black bands behind; throat and breast, dull reddish buff orange, the sides paler and unspotted; back, on the upper part, blackish brown, and on the lower part patched with greyish white, the feathers margined with yellowish brown or grey, giving it an elegant mottled appearance.

The wings extend to the width of about ten inches; their feathers are marked as in the male, but the dark parts are blackish brown. The tail has the two middle feathers grey. All the colours in the female are less pure than in the male, and clouded with dull brown.

The young are described as resembling the adult female; the black of the head, back, and wings being tinged with brown. Individuals have been met with either wholly white, or with patches of that colour.

In the carefully compiled and valuable 'Account of the Birds found in Norfolk,' by John Henry Gurney, Esq., and William Richard Fisher, Esq., there is an account and figure of a very beautiful variety of the Mountain Finch, described as follows:—With the exception of a brown patch on one or two feathers of one side of the tail, this specimen was entirely white; the greater part of its plumage being also pervaded with an elegant tint of yellow, which particularly spread itself on the sides of the head, and on the edges of the quill feathers of the wings and tail, as well as on the feathers under the wing. The colour of these latter, which is usually yellow, was remarkably bright in this specimen, and extended over a greater space than usual.



TREE SPARROW.

# TREE SPARROW.

## MOUNTAIN SPARROW.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Passer montanus,* | Ray. |
| *Pyrgita montana,* | Fleming. |
| *Fringilla montana,* | Pennant. Montagu. |
| *Loxia hamburgia,* | Gmelin. |

*Passer*—A Sparrow. *Montana*—Appertaining to mountains. *Mons*—A mountain.

This is an interesting bird, of just sufficient rarity to make its acquisition generally acceptable; while not so uncommon as to fall to the lot of but few to obtain, or to run the risk of extermination itself, so far as our country at least is concerned. It is also one of peculiarly neat appearance, though altogether destitute of any pretensions to outside show—'simplex munditüs'—elegantly neat. There are who might borrow a lesson even from the Tree Sparrow, and it is, if they would learn it—that they are 'when unadorned, adorned the most.'

It is indigenous in most countries of Europe, from the Mediterranean, through Spain, Italy, France, and Holland, to Norway and Sweden, and extends also over a considerable portion of Asia, being common, it is said, in Siberia and Lapland, as also in Japan and China, and in some of the mountainous parts of India.

In Yorkshire, and no doubt in other northern counties, it breeds. It is not unfrequent near York, and also in several parts of the West Riding—near Doncaster, Barnsley, Wakefield, and Leeds. In Worcestershire, I have known this species not very unfrequent in the neighbourhood of Bromsgrove; one I remember to have been shot near Charford brook, and others, 'si rite recordor,' were taken on the winter nights in the stacks in which they roosted with various other birds: one appears to have been obtained, and only one, in the county of Cornwall. In Lancashire it has been observed about Chat Moss, and is not uncommon in Shropshire; in Northamptonshire, it has been seen near Aldwinkle, by Mr. Doubleday; in Surrey, by Mr. Meyer; and in Sussex, by A. E. Knox, Esq., who says that it is a scarce bird there, though possibly more frequently overlooked than observed, and that it probably breeds there in some instances, as he has obtained specimens in May and June. It is frequently taken by the bird-catchers on the Downs near Brighton, when in company with other birds.

It is likewise met with in the county of Essex, near Southchurch; in Lincolnshire, near Wainfleet, and no doubt in other localities; as also in Suffolk, Norfolk, Staffordshire, Rutlandshire, Cambridgeshire, Durham, and Northumberland, as far north as Newcastle. In the neighbourhood of Yarmouth, it is stated by the Messrs. C. J. and James Paget, in their Natural History of that place, to be not uncommon in lanes, and also near the town. John Henry Gurney, and William Richard Fisher, Esqrs., in their 'Account of the Birds found in Norfolk,' say of them that a few are found in that county, and breed there, remaining throughout the year, and that they are very local in their habits, except in winter, when they sometimes disperse in search of food.

In Ireland it appears to be unknown, and the same remark applies to the Orkneys. In Scotland it has occurred on Main Wood, near Elgin, but I am not aware of any other record of its having been met with in that part of the kingdom.

It is locally migratory, arriving in Sussex in the month of October, and usually departing again in April.

The Tree Sparrow and the House Sparrow are as different in their habits as Horace's country-bred and town-bred mice. The former shuns the habitations of man, which the latter makes his own, and only approaches even a village, when the severity of the weather renders such an approach necessary through lack of food elsewhere. The hilly and more mountainous districts are the more sought in preference by them, as imported by their specific Latin name, while the others abound in the most level districts. They are sprightly and active birds.

Both old and young birds of this species collect together in flocks with other birds during the winter half of the year, when they frequent, together with them, the usual places of resort for the procuring of food, namely, farm-yards, and other situations where it is to be obtained.

Their flight is rather heavy, slow, and strained, as if the wings were not sufficiently equal to the carriage of the body through the air. They often progress along the ground in the same sort of sidelong manner that the Common Sparrow does; and they have also a habit of flirting the tail slightly about, especially when they first alight.

The food of this species consists of insects and the tender parts of vegetables; these in the spring and summer, their 'second course' being grain and seeds: with the former the young are fed.

The common note of the Tree Sparrow is a monotonous chirp, not unlike that, so well known, of the House Sparrow, but more shrill; and of its higher vocal powers, Mr. Edward Blyth says that it consists of a number of these chirps, intermixed with some pleasing notes, delivered in a continuous strain, sometimes for many minutes together, very loudly, but having a characteristic Sparrow-like tone throughout.

James Dalton, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, informs me that he has taken the nest of this bird from a Sand Martin's hole, near Buckingham. They build in many various situations, most frequently in a hole of a tree, whence their English name, either that formed naturally by decay, or that in which some other bird, such as the Woodpecker, or one of the species has previously domiciled; sometimes also, in old nests that had been inhabited by Magpies and Crows; and in these cases, the nest, that is that of the Tree Sparrow, is domed over, as is also that of the House Sparrow, when it locates its habitation in similar situations. Not unfrequently they build in the thatch of barns and outhouses, but only in thoroughly country places, the entrance being from the outside; also in the tiling of houses, and in stacks and wood faggots; likewise in old walls not many feet above the ground. Arthur Strickland, Esq., of Bridlington Quay, has recorded that a pair built their nest, a domed one, in a hedge in the grounds of Walton Hall.

Nidification, it would appear, commences in February, and incubation in March, two or three broods being reared in the year.

The nest is formed of hay, and is lined with wool, down, and feathers. It is loosely put together, and the consequence of this untidiness, the larger straws being left hanging carelessly outside, is, that the situation of the nest is betrayed to the prowling bird-nester. The same situation is often again occupied from year to year.

The eggs, from four to six in number, are of a dull white, speckled all over with light greyish brown of different shades.

This bird does not vary much in plumage at different seasons of the year, an additional brilliancy in spring being the main feature. Male; weight, about six drachms; length, about five inches and a half, or from that to three quarters; bill, bluish black and polished in the spring and summer; in the winter black at the tip only, and yellowish towards the base. Iris, dark brown; in front of the eye, between it and the bill, and running through it is a black mark, and underneath a narrow black streak; there is also a large black patch on the side of the head. Head on the crown, chesnut of an opaque shade. Neck on the sides, white, with a triangular-shaped spot of pure black, on the back it is chesnut, spotted with black on its lower part, the inner webs of the feathers being of that colour; nape, chesnut, interrupted by an incomplete band of white; chin and throat, black. Breast, greyish white, tinged on the sides with yellowish brown. Back on the upper part, chesnut with black spots or streaks, the inner webs of the feathers being of that latter colour, and the outer of the former in nearly equal proportion; on the lower part it is yellowish brown.

The wings extend to within an inch and a half of the end of the tail; greater wing coverts, deep blackish brown, edged with chesnut, white at the end; lesser wing coverts, deep blackish brown edged with chesnut, and some of them white at the end, so that there are thus made two bands of white across the wing; primaries, brownish black, edged on the outside webs with pale yellowish brown, broadening where the web widens, and extending to the shaft at the base, and on the inner ones more broadly with chesnut brown. The first quill feather is the same length as the fifth, the second, third, and fourth nearly equal in length, and the longest in the wing, but the second rather the longest of the three; the secondaries also brownish black, margined in the same way but more widely; tertiaries, brownish black, still more widely edged with chesnut brown. Greater and lesser under wing coverts, pale fawn-colour. The tail is very little forked, the feathers being of nearly equal length; they are greyish brown, edged with yellowish grey; upper tail coverts also brown. Legs, toes, and claws, pale greyish yellow brown.

The female resembles the male, but is rather less in size, her length being not quite five inches and a half, and her tints are paler; the head is yellowish brown on the crown, and the chesnut parts are changed to the former colour.

In the young the head on the crown is paler than in the adult, and the white on the neck is not so pure. The throat does not assume at first the black of the mature bird.

# SPARROW.

## HOUSE SPARROW. COMMON SPARROW.

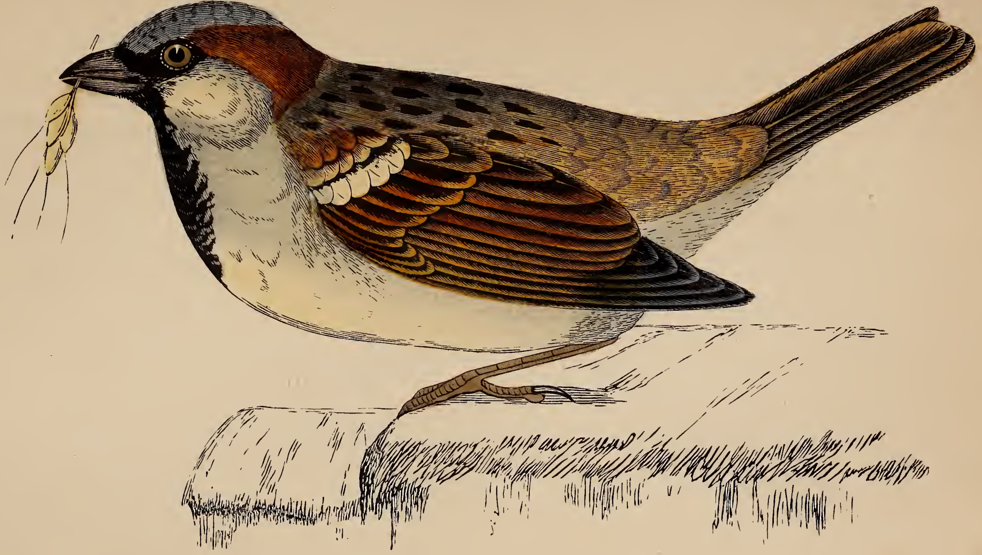
| | |
|---|---|
| *Passer domesticus,* | SELBY. |
| *Fringilla domestica,* | PENNANT. MONTAGU. |
| *Pyrgita domestica,* | FLEMING. |

*Passer*—A Sparrow. *Domesticus*—Domestic—of, or pertaining to houses.

THE geographical range of this well-known bird is very extensive. It is common throughout Europe, from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Dalmatia, to Spain, Portugal, Italy, the Levant, Liguria, and all the islands of the Mediterranean; in the north of Africa and the range of the Nubian Mountains; in Asia also, in the Himalayan district, and in various other parts.

Everywhere he is the same, at least under the same circumstances, except indeed in appearance; for, 'unlike, O how unlike,' is the smoke-begrimed Sparrow of the town, to the handsomely-plumaged bird of the country! Everywhere he makes himself at home, and 'æquo pulsat pede pauperumque tabernas, regumque turres.' The 'cloud-capt towers' and the 'Poor Law Union,' the 'lowly thatched cottage,' and the splendid Gothic mansion, nay, the very palace of the Queen of England herself, one and all bear testimony to the universality of the dispersion of the Sparrow, and the self-accommodating nature of his domiciliary visitations.

In this country it is everywhere, or nearly everywhere to be seen in greater or less abundance. In the neighbourhood of Doncaster, it comes under the latter category, for some years ago I recorded in the 'Naturalist,' old series, vol. ii, page 166, my observation, corroborated on his noticing it by the editor, that there they are, I mean, that they were at that time, far from common birds.



SPARROW.

Throughout Ireland, Scotland, and the Orkney and Shetland Islands it is to be found as in England. In the outer Hebrides it is said to have been known only at Kilbar, in the Island of Barra, where it had made its abode in a ruined church, thus fulfilling literally the words of the Psalmist, 'Yea, the Sparrow hath found her a house, and the Swallow a nest where she may lay her young; even Thy altars O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God.' It now appears to be multiplying in that district.

Following the methodical arrangement prescribed to myself in the introduction to the present 'History of British Birds,' at this stage of the narrative of the Sparrow, I have arrived at that portion of my, alas! too brief, allotted space, which is assigned to the subject of migration. But on this head little could be said: where is the Sparrow to migrate to or from, for where is he not to be found?

Wherever this bird is met with, his character is as I have said, much the same—bold, pert, and familiar; 'instead of the gentle and pleasing confidence displayed towards the human race by the Redbreast, the Nightingale, the Redstart, and some other small birds, the Sparrow shews a bold disregard that is far from engaging affection; as if our kindness and our enmity were alike despised. Instances are not wanting, however, of great attachment on the part of caged Sparrows for persons by whom they have been reared.'

In London, where, as in most large towns, they abound, one has been known to perch on and under the moveable 'café' of one of those examples of 'London labour and the London poor,' who deserve far more commiseration than I fear even Mr. Mayhew's very able work will earn for them—from some at least—and there pick up its crumbs; nay, not only was it wont thus daily and hourly to do, but it was even accustomed to go the length of a whole street to meet him and it on the way from his home—from his nightly home to his daily one—whenever, and as often as he was detained, perhaps by the severity of a winter's morning. It would then ride back in the 'café,' wheeled along by him, to receive the reliques of the early meal which some industrious man would snatch on his way to his work—to 'gather up the crumbs,' though not from a 'rich man's table.' The Sparrow used to feed out of the hand of the said honest Patrick Corbett, to sit on his knee, and drink out of his cup; 'she was unto him as a daughter.' I say she, for it was a hen bird; and for four successive years, with a brief interval, all her progeny, which must at the expiration of that period, have amounted, at the rate of two or three broods a year, and five or six young to a brood, to some fifty or sixty at least, were 'brought out' under the matronage of their mother, to the morning and evening entertainments which Patrick Corbett gave. Doubtless they returned the compliment in the way of 'concerts of ancient music,' for even the chirp of a Sparrow must be music to the dweller in a London street.

The interval above alluded to was a space of some two or three months, during which time our female friend shunned the society of the keeper of the itinerant coffee-shop, who had, most unintentionally, wounded her maternal feelings. An individual Sparrow of one of her broods finding it at its first essay in the air, not so easy a thing to fly up as to fly down, was removed by Patrick, out of pure kindness, to his own house for the day, where it was treated with the greatest care and affection. Nevertheless it died, and the mother shewed her sense of the wrong of the supposed child-stealing, by abstaining for the period mentioned from the society of her patron and friend; but in process of time a new family arrived, and for their sakes she overgot the injury, made up the quarrel, which, as it takes two parties to make, and in this case there was only one, it was no difficult matter to do, and all went on, and for aught I know, may still go on, at the corner of Tavistock Square, as harmoniously and pleasantly as before: 'adsit omen.'

The following pleasing instance of both instinct and affection on behalf of another individual of our present species is from the pen of Mr. William H. Cordeaux, in the 'Zoologist,' page 2798:—'Living in the city portion of the great metropolis of London, I observed, one afternoon, in the aperture generally left for the cellar, or kitchen window, when underground, an unfledged House Sparrow, incapacitated from flying to any distance, which had been inadvertently precipitated down this same dungeon, across which, in an oblique direction, was laid an iron bar, extending within a foot of the surface; the mother was at the top, looking down with pity and alarm at the awkward position of this, perhaps, her only child; many and ingenious were the attempts on the part both of parent and offspring for the regaining of the latter's lost position; each and all proved futile and unavailing. I looked on with a degree of pleasurable excitement, mixed with fear and anxiety, lest the drama should be incomplete, by the flying away of the mother, and the desertion of the child; but no, Nature's inculcated ways on these points are perfect and all-sufficient, as most beautifully this case proves, for although each new proposal seemed to be blasted in the carrying out, at length the intelligent creature, after considering for a moment, flies away, returns with a stout straw in its beak, and rests for a few seconds on the edge; then conceive my delight, when the little nestling, after a chirp or two from its mother, learning no doubt the particulars of the project, climbs to the farthest end of the bar, next the ground, receives the proffered straw in its beak, and is raised, to my breathless and unspeakable astonishment, to the earth, on which its now delighted mother stands.'

In the 'Yorkshire Gazette,' of August the 16th., 1851, there is the following account of a Sparrow which had been taken young and kept alive at a house at Ripon:—'It grew exceedingly familiar, following Mrs. Jones or her daughter about the house, perching on their shoulders, and at night taking its rest either on the top of the Canary-bird's cage, or the old clock. Since the present warm weather set in, it has generally taken flight, and remained out all night, but early in the morning it is to be seen ready to enter the house. Should the front door not be open, it flies round to the back one, and if there disappointed, flutters and taps its neb against the window. We are informed that when the doors are open this little bird will visit the house about six times a day for food.'

Again, in the 'Zoologist,' pages 1298-1299, occurs the following, communicated by Mr. George Lawson, of Hawkhill, near Dundee:—'One evening, about eight o'clock, I forget at what season of the year, but it was quite dark, a loud tapping was heard upon the panes of one of the windows of a room in which there was no light. The room was on the first floor of the building. There were but two persons, and both of these ladies, in the house at the time, and they were afraid to enter the room to trace the cause of the annoyance. The window looked into the garden, which lay on the south side of the house; and serious apprehensions of a robbery being entertained, one of the ladies, after locking the door of the room, ventured to enter the garden from the ground floor; but on looking to the window nothing could be discovered; the tapping noise however continued.

The gentleman himself having returned home about nine o'clock, he procured a ladder, wherewith he ascended to the window, in order to ascertain the cause of the disturbance, when he found it to be a Common House Sparrow, busily tapping with its beak at one of the low panes. He took the little bird in his hand—it offered no resistance—brought it down with him, and put it in a cage, where it remained all night. On the following morning he took out the bird for the purpose of bringing it to me; but supposing it unable to fly, from the circumstance of its having allowed itself to be taken, he permitted it to leap out of his hand; which accomplished, it flew away, and has never since repeated its visit.'

In the same magazine, pages 2351-2, Mr. William H. Tugwell appropriately gives the following remarkable instance of sagacity in the Common House Sparrow:—'This morning,' November 24th., 1848, 'it happened that a Sparrow had got his head fixed between two tiles, which were placed perpendicularly against a wall in our garden, so as to completely prevent its extricating itself, when, on being discovered by its companions, several of them, by their united efforts, endeavoured to extricate him by laying hold of his head with their beaks and flying backwards, but without effecting their purpose. Their earnest solicitude for their brother in affliction, coupled with the awkwardness of the position, soon caused the death of the unfortunate bird. After extricating him by means of a pole, I found the head quite bared of the feathers, so earnest were his mates in their attempts to release him.'

So again, 'An unfortunate Sparrow,' says Bishop Stanley, 'who had also been made prisoner in his own nest, met with a very different fate, being actually killed, instead of preserved, by the over-zealous kind attentions of his mate. The case occurred in the spring of 1818, in Surrey. The pair were in search of a place for building their nest; and the male bird finding a tempting hole among the tiles of the roof, got into it; unfortunately he became entangled in the broken mortar, and could not force his way back. The female saw his situation, and after flying backwards several times, twittering, and apparently in great distress, attempted to pull him out. Several birds were attracted by the accident, and came fluttering round, but were beaten off by the hen Sparrow. She then redoubled her own efforts to get him out, and seizing his beak above the nostrils, with her own beak, pulled it so hard that she killed him. She did not appear, however, aware of the mischief she had done, but continued pulling at the dead body of the unfortunate bird, with as much perseverance as if it had been alive. She was, at length, driven away by a person who saw the whole transaction, and with some difficulty extricated the dead bird. Its head was dreadfully mangled, and the beak of the hen had evidently penetrated the brain. About an hour afterwards, a Sparrow, supposed to be this hen, was observed sitting on the very spot where the accident had happened, crouched together, with her feathers all standing up, so as to give her the appearance of a ball, conveying a perfect idea of disconsolate suffering.'

'A few years ago,' says Mr. James Bladon, of Pontypool, in the 'Zoologist,' pages 16-17, 'I was sitting in a cottage, when my attention was attracted to an unusual screaming of a small bird. I immediately went to the back door, and saw that it proceeded from a House Sparrow that was fluttering about on the wall, at the base of which was a duck with something in its bill, which it was endeavouring to swallow. Upon attentively observing it, I found this to be a callow nestling, and from the agonies of the poor Sparrow, there was no mistaking the parent; the feathers of the latter were all erect, and it continued hopping and fluttering about, and uttering the most distressing cries for the loss of one of its young, which I suppose had fallen out of its nest.'

For a considerable portion of the year, Sparrows are occupied in pairs in the bringing out their several broods of young, and when the last of these is able to fly, the old and young ones together repair to the fields, where, during the time that the corn is ripe, they are to be seen in large flocks, gathering in their own harvest; but when the crops are carried, and the gleaning is over, they soon repair to their former quarters, and renew their familiarity with the habitations of men. They may indeed at all times be considered as gregarious birds in some degree; at all events they are generally brought together in greater or less numbers, so that the 'Sparrow that sitteth alone upon the house-top' has been well selected by the Psalmist as an emblem of forlorn melancholy. They shew considerable affection to each other, and anxiety for their young, and are spirited, courageous, energetic, cautious, cunning, and voracious birds. They are said to be trained in Persia to hunt butterflies, such being one of the royal sports there. In the spring of the year contests among themselves are frequently to be witnessed. Two at first begin; a third comes up and joins in the fray, when he is presently attacked by a fourth. Others stand still and look on and behold the war.

'Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis;'

the din and clamour increases until some think it time to retreat, and this possibly has the effect of breaking up the party, and so the 'emeute' is quieted. As in case of the modern 'duello,' no danger is done to either life or limb—the 'honour' of the parties is easily satisfied without; a hostile 'meeting' and a 'sham fight' are quite sufficient, without ulterior result.

Sparrows are very fond of bathing, and also of dusting themselves in the roads, at all seasons of the year, as well as of sunning themselves, lying on one side in some warm and sheltered place, such as a gravel-walk, the roof of a house, or even against the wall of one. When not engaged in feeding, they perch on trees, bushes, and hedges, the tops of stacks and houses, walls and wood. At night they repose under the eaves of houses, about chimneys, in holes and crevices of buildings, in bushes, the sides of straw-stacks, and among ivy, or other evergreen plants with which walls are covered. They often live in their nests in the cold weather, repairing them with straw and feathers, either for their own warmth, or providing thus early for their future family.

'It is often remarked,' says Dr. Stanley, 'what impudent birds are London Sparrows! and not without reason. Born and bred in the bustle of the town, they must either live and jostle with the crowd, or look down from the house-tops and die of hunger. Naturally enough, they prefer the former; and all our London readers will, we are sure, testify to the cool intrepidity with which this familiar bird will pounce upon a bit of bread, or some other tempting morsel which happens to catch its eye upon the pavement, and with what triumph and exultation it bears it off to its mate, seated on some window-sill or coping-stone above, or followed, perhaps, by three or four disappointed companions, who were a moment too late in seizing the spoil.'

'A Sparrow is not only bold with regard to men, but still more so on particular occasions towards other birds. On the edge of a certain lawn grew a close thick bush. On this lawn, amongst others, the Blackbirds used to come and forage for worms. One day a person happened to be looking at a Blackbird in the act of making off with a prize, when a Sparrow, darting from the thick bush, instantly assailed the Blackbird, and compelled him to drop the worm, of which he took immediate possession. So singular a circumstance induced the observer to look out now and then, when Blackbirds came, and he frequently saw the same piratical practice adopted by the Sparrow, who thus, by keeping watch in his bush, was enabled to enrich himself on the labours of the larger bird.' I have lately observed one Sparrow chasing another in precisely a similar way, under similar circumstances. The Bishop continues, 'But notwithstanding this unfavourable feature in his character, he has been known to act with great consideration and kindness to birds requiring his good offices.'

In the 'Naturalist's Magazine,' we find the following story in point:—'A lady, living in Chelsea, was extremely fond of birds, of which she kept a considerable number in cages. Amongst others she had a Canary, which was a particular favourite, but the loudness of his note often obliged her to put him outside of her window, in some trees which were trained up in front of her house. One morning, during breakfast, when the cage was there placed, a Sparrow was observed to fly round about it, then perch upon the top, and twitter to the bird within, between whom and itself a sort of conversation seemed to ensue. After a few moments he flew away, but returned in a short time, bearing a worm or small grub in his bill, which he dropped into the cage, and immediately flew away. Similar presents were received day after day, at the same time, by the Canary, from his friend the Sparrow, with whom, at length, he became so intimate, that he very often received the food thus brought into his own bill from that of the Sparrow. The circumstance attracted the notice of the lady's neighbours, who often watched these daily visits; and some of them, to try the extent of the Sparrow's kindness, also hung their birds out at the window, when they found them also fed; but the first and longest visit was always paid by the Sparrow to his original friend, the Canary.

Though thus intimate and social with his own kind, it was observed that this Sparrow was exceedingly shy and timid with respect to human beings; for, though many were witnesses to the above, they were obliged to keep at a distance, and use great caution, otherwise he immediately flew away. The attention was carried on throughout the summer, and extended to the beginning of autumn, when the visits entirely ceased, whether intentionally on the part of the Sparrow, or that he met with some accident, could not be ascertained.'

'That they will attend to their young, far beyond the usual period, in case of necessity, the following anecdotes will prove, though we believe many, if not most birds, will do the same under similar circumstances; the experiment may be easily tried, by slightly tying the wings of young birds, when nearly fledged, or confining them by a thread to the bottom of the nest, taking care not to injure them.' Even, however, with any amount of care, I would not wish to see this done, even though but for a short time, as needless anxiety, at all events, would be caused both to the old and the young bird.

'A pair of Sparrows,' says Mr. Graves, 'had built their nest in a wall close to my house. I noticed that the old birds continued to bring food to the nest some time after the brood had left it. I had the curiosity to place a ladder against the wall, and looked into the nest, when, to my surprise, I found a full-grown bird which had got its foot entangled in some thread, which formed part of the nest, in such a manner as to prevent its leaving it with the rest. Wishing to see how much longer the old birds would feed their imprisoned offspring, I left the young one as I found it, and observed that the parents supplied it, during the whole of the autumn and part of the winter months; but the weather setting in cold very soon after Christmas, I was afraid it would kill the young Sparrow, and therefore disengaged its leg. In a day or two it went with the old ones in search of food; but they continued to feed it till March, and during the whole time they all nestled in the same spot.'

In the first volume of the 'Zoological Journal,' in a note to the fourteenth page, it is stated that a pair of Sparrows, which had built in the thatched roof of a house, were observed to continue their regular visits to the nest long after the time when the young birds ought naturally to have taken flight. This unusual circumstance continued throughout the year; and in the winter, a gentleman who all along observed them, determined on finding out the cause. He therefore placed a ladder, and, on mounting, found one of the young ones detained a prisoner by means of a string or scrap of worsted, which formed part of the nest, having become accidentally twisted round its leg. Being thus disabled from procuring its own living, it had been fed by the continued exertions of the parents.

The flight of the Sparrow is undulated and rather rapid, but if only made for a short distance, nearly direct with a continued fluttering motion. On the ground, it advances by hops and leaps, both long and short.

The food of the well-known bird before us consists of insects, grain, and seeds, as also indeed of almost anything eatable that comes in its way; sometimes it pursues a butterfly or other insect on the wing, but it is not very expert as a flycatcher. It may be seen in menageries fearlessly feeding among birds and beasts of all possible descriptions. It feeds its young for a time with soft fruits, young vegetables, and insects, particularly caterpillars. It is itself good eating.

Much has been written on the question of the comparative usefulness, or the contrary, of the Sparrow, as a devourer of the former-named food on the one hand, or of the latter on the other; and much I suppose one may allow is to be said on each side of the question, as so much has been said: but there can I think be no doubt that the harm they may do, even granting it to be considerable, is compensated, and more than compensated by that which they prevent. Mr. John Hawley, of Doncaster, has sensibly argued the question in the 'Zoologist,' and thus states the case at page 2349:—'I have watched pairs of Sparrows repeatedly feeding their young, and have found that they bring food to the nest once in ten minutes, during at least six hours of the twenty-four, and that each time from two to six caterpillars are brought—every naturalist will know this to be under the mark. Now, suppose the 'three thousand five hundred Sparrows' destroyed by the 'Association for killing Sparrows,' were to have been alive the next spring, each pair to have built a nest, and reared successive broods of young, during three months, we have, at the rate of two hundred and fifty-two thousand per day, the enormous multitude of twenty-one millions, one hundred and sixty-eight thousand larvæ prevented from destroying the products of the land, and from increasing their numbers from fifty to five hundred fold!'

Thus again, in the next article in the same magazine, Mr. Joseph Duff, of Bishop Auckland, writing from that place, November 15th., 1848, gives a calculation made by himself some years previously, as follows, he says, 'Under the eaves were two Sparrows' nests, and, not having any other part of animated nature in view, I set myself the task of counting how often the Sparrows visited their nests with food during half an hour. One male bird, which was darker than the other, thus enabling me to distinguish him, captured fourteen flies on the wing, and the four birds went from their nests to a water-spout and back one hundred and four times.' He then goes on to calculate that if the common large flies, of which he ascertained that these were the larvæ, 'are as prolific as the common house fly, which is computed to produce in one season no less than twenty millions nine hundred thousand —but say in round numbers twenty millions—thus were prevented, by the capture of fourteen flies, the amazing number of two hundred and eighty millions.'

But even two Counsel will not suffice our Sparrow—his cause is a good one, but he has many and powerful enemies to plead against. Further, then, Mr. Edward Peacock, Jun., of Messingham, Kirton-in-Lindsay, Lincolnshire, February, 1849:—'I had not waited long before one came, darted under a tile, and in a few seconds flew away again. 'Well,' thought I, 'now is my time to catch the young rascals;' so up I climbed to the roof of the building, and drew out the nest, which contained four newly-hatched Sparrows. I took the young ones in my hands, when, lo! a green caterpillar crept from the mouth of one. I killed the four young birds, and each had caterpillars in it: this caused me to relent a little; but what struck me much more forcibly was, finding several wire-worms loose in the nest, which had obviously escaped from the young ones.' And yet again, the same Mr. Duff, of Bishop Auckland, at pages 2415-16, 'About a quarter of a mile east of this place is a round tower, standing on the Bishop of Durham's domain, and near the park wall: it had been in a dilapidated state for many years, and in the crevices were many both Starling and Sparrow nests—of the latter some scores. It was an object of interest to his present

Lordship; and about five or six years ago, to prevent its falling down, he had it repaired—every chink well pointed; and of course the colony was broken up, and the members dispersed: the next year but one, the field in which it stands was sown with turnips, and when the plants came up, and escaped the ravages of the fly, they looked well, and grew as well as perhaps any other turnips for five or six weeks, when, to the astonishment of Mr. Dawson, the bailiff, every plant was entirely covered with grub: whether the caterpillars belonged only to one species or not I do not know, for at that time I did not go to see; but nine women were to be seen daily for some time, gathering them off the plants and destroying them. Before the following spring, several places in the building were re-opened, and the Sparrows soon took possession of their old domiciles; and since that time there has been no more trouble or loss with caterpillars. I leave the fact to speak for itself.' There are many other similar accounts. Mr. Jesse, too, states in his 'Gleanings in Natural History,' that it has been calculated that a single pair of Sparrows during the time they have their young to feed destroy above three thousand three hundred caterpillars in a week, besides other insects; countless thousands are thus prevented from multiplying.

The same Mr. Briggs, of Melbourne, whose arguments these gentlemen had been confuting, mentions afterwards incidentally, at page 2490, that from January to September, 1848, four thousand five hundred and seventy-nine Sparrows were sent to the 'Melbourne Sparrow Club.' I may here suggest that many of these supposed Sparrows may not actually have been such, for a similar institution existed until the present year in my own parish, and any small bird being conveniently called a Sparrow, and paid for accordingly by the authorities for the time being, at the rate of a half-penny each, the necessary funds amounted annually on the average to about five pounds. Many and many an innocent victim has been sacrificed for this blood-stained 'Head money,' a stigma on the annals of our village jurisprudence. The farmers are the parties supposed to be benefitted, though how erroneous the supposition is, I think I have sufficiently shewn. If not a case of 'Felo de se,' it is one unquestionably of pecuniary suicide. 'Temporary insanity' is the sole verdict that I, 'ex cathedrâ,' can pronounce against them, coupled with the wish that the repeal of the corn laws may make them more awake to their own real interests, and that their 'Insanity' may only be 'Temporary.' In flower gardens Sparrows do some little mischief, especially among the gay blossoms of early spring, whether in search of insects or for mere amusement it is hard to say. Crocuses and other bright-coloured flowers they seem to prefer, picking off the yellow ones, and leaving the purple and the white blossoms.

The note of this bird is a monotonous chirp, known to every one, and in addition to it a curious buzzing noise has been observed by one or two persons to have been uttered by this bird, but whether produced by the motion of the tail, which was kept fluttering all the time, or whether it proceeded from the throat, they seem to have been unable correctly to ascertain. The Rev. J. Pemberton Bartlett, at Kingston, and the Rev. Arthur Hussey, at Rottingdean, Sussex, both noticed it, and have recorded their observations thereon in the 'Zoologist,' at pages 353 and 452-3. These birds may often be seen and heard holding assemblies together, with a great deal of noise and clamour; and, as in 'another place,' there is a good deal that is unintelligible, and a large amount of repetition in what they say. The late William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, says that he has heard them begin their chattering in the ivy that surrounded a town house at ten minutes past three in the morning, in the month of June, half an hour before they stirred out.

Mr. W. Kidd asserts in 'The Naturalist,' vol. i., page 150, that if a young Sparrow be taken from the nest when not more than four days old, before, that is to say, it has had time to learn its vernacular language, and be kept within hearing of a Canary, for instance, and of a Canary only, in full song, it will, in less than three weeks, begin to utter the notes of the Canary, and that in a short time the pupil will rival the master in song. I wish for the sake of many a young learner of a different species, that the science of music could be always as easily acquired.

The nest, which is large in size, and very loosely compacted, is usually placed under the eaves of the tiles of houses or other buildings, or in any hole or cavity that will supply it with a convenient receptacle for its brood. It is compiled of hay, straw, wool, moss, or twigs, and a profusion of feathers, which they are sometimes seen conveying to their holes even in winter. It often measures as much as six inches in diameter, and sometimes even much more, if the situation requires it. The materials just mentioned, as also any others that may meet the requirements of the bird, are variously disposed and arranged together, according to circumstances. Dove-cotes and pigeon-houses are frequently built in, and the same situation is continued to be resorted to, and this even when the young have been exposed to misfortune from rain. It would appear that trees are built in more from necessity than choice, namely, by yearling birds which commence nidification late, by which time convenient places in walls have been pre-occupied; or by individuals which from some cause or other, had been obliged to give up the latter localities. Fewer broods in the year are produced therefore in the case of nests in trees, both from their being commenced later in the season, and from their requiring naturally more time in the construction: they are accordingly better made. Mr. Meyer describes one which was handsomely built of moss, grass, and lichens, and neatly lined with hair. The entrance in these cases is by the side, and the interior is profusely lined with feathers.

The late Dr. Stanley, Bishop of Norwich, in his entertaining work so often before referred to, writes, "Then for his nest—while other birds must select their own accustomed spots, the similar tree or bush, the same materials, etc., the Sparrow, like a bird who knows the world, is everywhere at home, and ready to establish himself wherever chance may happen to place him. If he lives remote from towns and cities, and the habitations of man, a tree answers his purpose, and a comfortable nest he will there build, with the rare addition of an arched top into the bargain, which possibly he may have learned from that knowing bird, the Magpie. In default of a tree or a house, a chink in a rock or a hole in a wall suits him; but after all, the nooks and eaves of buildings are his favourite resorts; accordingly in London, where he has his choice, he will often select droll places—amidst the carved foliage of some Corinthian column a projection of straws, with now and then a feather, announces a nest in preparation.

But some London Sparrows aspire still higher, one pair having actually built in the Lion's mouth, over Northumberland House, at Charing Cross. A still more extraordinary place was pitched upon by a north-country couple:—A coal vessel from Newcastle put into Nairn, in Scotland, and while there, two Sparrows were frequently observed to alight on the top of the vessel's mast, while the vessel remained in port. This occasioned no great surprise to the crew; but after putting to sea, the two Sparrows were seen following the sloop, and having come up with her, resumed their posts at the top of the mast. Crumbs of bread were scattered upon the deck, with a view of enticing them down, of which they soon availed themselves; and after eating heartily, they again returned to the mast head. By the time the vessel had been two days at sea, they became much more familiar, and descended boldly for the purpose of feeding. The voyage was a long one, lasting for some days, when on reaching the River Tyne, to which they were bound, the nest with four young ones, was carefully taken down, and being put in the crevice of a ruined house, on the banks of the river, they continued to rear their brood.

When thus upon the subject of young Sparrows, we may direct attention to the very rapid growth of their feathers in hot weather. In the month of August a young one was taken from a nest, with neither down nor feathers upon it, the rudiments only of plumage being visible under the skin, on the back of the head and along the back; on the sides of the wings, the shafts of the quills had just pierced the skin. Eight days after, another young one was taken from the same nest, covered with feathers, and able to make some use of its wings. Another circumstance is worthy of notice. The old ones had adapted the food to their powers of digestion. The stomach of the first was weak, and filled almost entirely with insects, only one grain of wheat and a few of sand being found. In the second, the gizzard was become vastly more muscular, and contained nine grains of wheat whole, besides some smaller pieces, the remains of several beetles, and some larger gravel stones.'

Another singular situation selected by these birds for their nest, was in a thorn bush, stuck, as one sometimes sees done, at the top of a chimney, either as a preventive of smoking, or to check the ingress of any creatures; and although it happened to be a kitchen chimney, and smoke was issuing from it throughout the whole day, there they completed their works of nidification, incubation, and probably of education. Occasionally a hedge is built in. One nest has been found in a passage, where servants were constantly passing and repassing.

I am informed by Claude A. Lillingston, Esq., of the

Chauntry, Ipswich, that he has found a nest of the Sparrow in the outside of that of a Sparrow-Hawk—a singular locality with reference both to the name and the nature of the bird. 'Whether,' he observes, 'the Hawk was keeping them till they increased in size, or whether he had come to terms of peace with them, I do not know.' They also often build beneath the nests of the Rooks, with whose habits they have nothing in common, making this use of their structures as a defence for themselves, and also manifesting their sagacious anxiety and contrivance for the safety of their own broods. Frequently too they serve an action of ejectment against the Martins, and take forcible possession of the nests they have so laboriously constructed for their young, and thus is 'Love's labour lost.' Some have been known to build their nests in the holes made by Sand Martins in the side of a clay-pit, using, contrary to their usual custom, but a small quantity of materials, adopting probably the arrangement they found ready for them; possibly too in such a situation the materials they ordinarily use in such abundance might not have been readily procurable.

The following appeared in the 'Glasgow Argus,' in May, 1846:—'Last week on the Aurora leaving the Bromielaw for Belfast, a Sparrow's nest was discovered in the rigging; but the birds did not choose on that occasion to accompany their nest to the Green Isle. On the return of the vessel, however, the Sparrows again visited their former abode, which had not been disturbed by the voyage, and deposited an egg in it, which attached them so much to it, that they valorously left their native land and sailed with the Aurora for Ireland.' 'The nest,' Mr. Thompson adds, 'rested partly on the sail, and was destroyed by its being unfurled, when containing one or two eggs. The vessel was accustomed to sail every second day from Glasgow to Belfast.'

I must, however, differ from Mr. Thompson's opinion as to the honesty of the Sparrow, with regard to his neighbour's dwelling. I fear that the 'Appropriation Clause' will be found on record among his 'Acts,' and leave a deserved stigma on his reputation.

The Sparrow pairs early in the season, and two or three broods are reared each year. A pair built a nest, and laid several eggs, at Markle, near East Linton, about the 15th. of December, 1842; a nest was found at Darley Abbey, near Derby, on the 20th. of December in the same year, containing four eggs; and on the 22nd. of the following February one was observed building its nest in the spout of the schoolroom at the same place, by Robert John Bell, Esq., of Mickleover House, near Derby. Sometimes, and not very rarely, I believe, even four broods have been known to be produced in the same year. The young birds often come abroad before they are well able to provide by effective flight for their security, and thus individuals are frequently either pushed accidentally from the nests, or lose their footing and totter over, falling to the ground. Almost as soon as they are partially able to take care of themselves, they are attended by the male alone, and the female prepares again for a new family. As soon as the nest is ready, the first brood are left to themselves, but they still remain about the premises, roosting at night with other individuals either older or younger. The male birds, while the hen is sitting, roost somewhere in the neighbourhood. When the young are abroad and fed by the old ones, the latter carry themselves in an erect manner, with a sort of pride in their deportment, and the former testify their wishes with a quivering of the wings and a constant chirping.

The first set of eggs generally consists of five or six. They are dull light grey, or greyish white, much spotted and streaked all over with ash-colour and dusky brown, varying much in appearance, though preserving for the most part, a general resemblance. They also differ very frequently and very much in size and shape.

The Sparrow is a stout thick-set bird. Male; length, a little over six inches to six and a quarter; bill, bluish lead-colour. From its base, which is yellowish in winter, a black streak runs backwards to the eye. Iris, hazel, that is, dark brown; the space in front of it has the feathers tipped with grey, as are those which compose a line under the eye, and one of a deep chesnut brown over it, which latter is terminated behind by a small white dot. From the eye a broad band of chesnut brown runs down each side of the neck, meeting together behind. Head on the crown, fine bluish grey in the summer, but more dull, by the tips of the feathers being faded, in the autumn and winter; neck on the sides, greyish white, fading into yellowish grey, on the front black, many of the feathers tipped with grey; nape, fine dark rufous brown. Chin and throat, deep black, but many of the feathers are tipped with grey in the autumn and winter; breast, on the upper part meeting the throat, black as it also is, below, dull greyish or brownish white. Back, fine dark rufous brown on its upper part, the centre of each feather nearly black; on its lower part it is chesnut brownish grey, with a tinge of yellowish.

The wings, which expand to the width of nearly nine inches and a half, have the first three quill feathers nearly equal in length, but the third slightly longer than the first, and the second rather the longest of the three, the fourth a little shorter than the third, the fifth more than an eighth of an inch shorter than the fourth. Greater wing coverts, brownish black, broadly edged with pale rufous brown, and slightly tipped with dull white; of the lesser wing coverts, the first ones are brownish black tipped with white more or less extensively, and forming an oblique bar across each wing; sometimes half their length is of this colour; the rest are brownish red and partly black; primaries, blackish brown, with narrow outer edges of brownish yellow, and the inner more broadly margined with brownish red; tertiaries, broadly edged with rufous brown. Tail, dark brownish, the outer webs of the feathers blackish edged with lighter brown; it is rather short, and even at the end; it extends about an inch and a half beyond the closed wings; upper tail coverts, pale brownish grey with a tinge of dull green; under tail coverts, dusky grey in the centre. Legs and toes, bluish brown; claws, darker brown, thick and short.

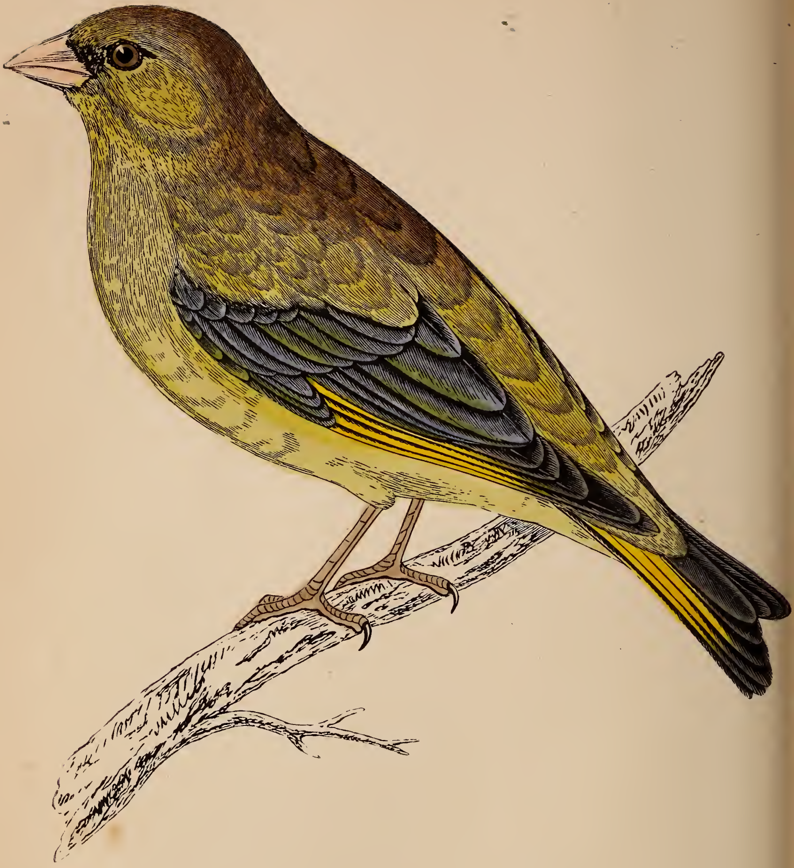
In the female the plumage also becomes more dull in the autumn and winter. Length, from five inches and a half to six inches; bill, brown, but paler than in the male; iris, dark brown; over it is a streak of dull yellowish, and a dusky line passes through and behind it. Head on the crown, neck on the back, and nape, light dull greenish brown; chin, throat, and breast, pale dull yellowish brown, darker on the sides, the centres of the feathers darker than the rest. Back, dull brown, the edges of the feathers dull buff-colour.

The wings have the transverse band formed by the tips of the first row of the lesser wing coverts pale yellowish, or dull white; they expand to the width of nine inches and a third. Tail, brownish black, the edges of the feathers light yellowish brown; under tail coverts, dull brownish white. Legs, toes, and claws, lighter brown than in the male.

The young, when fledged, resemble the female, but are much lighter coloured; at the first moult after the autumn, the males assume their adult plumage, but it is not till the next year that it is perfected. In the second season, the male has the bill greyish yellow or horn-colour above, and below with a faint tinge of red, the tip brown; from its base a broad band of obscure black runs down the front of the neck; in front of the eye the colour is blackish grey, and over it is a line of yellowish grey mixed with chesnut brown, extending down the neck. Head on the crown, brownish grey; the neck on the sides has some of the feathers with chesnut tips; in front it is light yellowish grey. Breast, light yellowish grey above, fading beneath into dull white; the back is light yellowish brown above, the inner webs of the feathers being brownish black at the tip, lower down it is light greenish dull grey. Greater wing coverts dusky, margined exteriorly with yellowish brown; lesser wing coverts, light brown, with a little pale yellowish brown or chesnut near the tips, and margined more broadly with yellowish brown; primaries, dusky, margined exteriorly with yellowish brown. Upper tail coverts, light greenish dull grey; under tail coverts, light yellowish grey; legs and toes, greyish yellow or horn-colour.

Variations of plumage in the Sparrow are not unfrequent. Thus, in one, the primaries and tail were white; another, shot by myself many years ago, in the parish of Taxal, Cheshire, near Chapel-on-le-Frith, Derbyshire, had some white feathers in the wings, and a few elsewhere. Another, a hen bird, was shot near Ipswich, Suffolk, of a dull white colour below, and a light cream-colour above; and another in the Butter Market in the same town, in October, 1850, with a dull white head. Specimens of an unvaried blackish brown are sometimes met with; some pure white; some cream-coloured. One white one had the red eyes which are generally seen in albinos; and the late Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, has recorded one in which the upper bill was nearly two inches long, and slightly twisted to one side, turning down also like that of the Curlew.

The plate is from a capital drawing by my friend the Rev. R. P. Alington, Rector of Swinhope, Lincolnshire.



GREENFINCH.

# GREENFINCH.

## GREEN GROSBEAK. GREEN LINNET.

| | |
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| *Coccothraustes chloris,* | Fleming. Jardine. |
| *Loxia chloris,* | Linnæus. Latham. |
| *Linaria chloris,* | Macgillivray. |
| *Fringilla chloris,* | Temminck. |

*Coccothraustes.* *Coccos*—A berry. *Thrauö*—To break. *Chloris.* *Chloros*—Light green; properly, the colour of young grass.

The geographical range of the Greenfinch is extensive throughout Europe and Asia. It is found from Sweden and Norway to Belgium and Crete, and the countries bordering on the Mediterranean; in Asia Minor and other parts.

It is a plentiful species throughout the year in all the cultivated parts of England. The same remark applies to Scotland, excepting in the northern and western islands. In Ireland it is common, and resident in suitable localities. It is a winter visitant in Shetland and Orkney, frequently appearing during that season with flights of Linnets, Larks, Snow Buntings, and other birds.

About the middle of March, or earlier, they begin to move, and disperse over the length and breadth of the land, and by the middle of April they disappear from their winter haunts.

Towards the end of autumn Greenfinches collect into flocks, frequently of considerable amount, attendant chiefly on the farmstead or its vicinity. They by no means isolate themselves from the company of other birds, especially those of their own 'order'—Chaffinches, Yellow-hammers, and others, but though not exclusive in their habits, they in general keep by themselves in straggling parties; even in summer small flocks have been seen: as many as thirty have been noticed together the last week in June. They are rather timid, though not particularly shy birds, but are easily caught, and kept in confinement.

The late William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, records in his 'Natural History of Ireland,' that he has known young Greenfinches, which after being kept for some little time were given their liberty every morning, and in the evening they returned as regularly to their cage to roost, as in a wild state they would have done to their favourite tree or shrub; so, he says, the Canary will also do, though but rarely.

In the spring time combats between them are frequently witnessed; at this season, too, they fly and wheel about, mostly in the morning, in a curious frolicsome manner, rising and fluttering, and then returning to the same bough many times in succession. They then resort still more nearly to the vicinity of human habitations, principally no doubt on account of the earlier shelter which plantations of evergreens afford them for building their nests, to which also in winter they mostly repair at night for harbour for themselves, returning to the same spot. They are fond of washing themselves. The old birds pay great attention to their young; and Meyer points out how, on a sudden, as I have observed myself in the case of the Rook, on a signal note being given by the former that danger is apprehended, the latter will instantly cease their clamour, though perhaps for food. He also records the following instance of their parental affection:—'One day several little nestlings were caught in a field adjoining the garden; they were scarcely fledged, and could not fly; we put them in a small cage, which we placed in a low hedge bordering the field where they were captured. It was not long before they were discovered by the parents, who immediately visited them, and appeared to bring them food. These marks of affection interested us, and fearing that where they were placed the young nestlings might become a prey to prowling cats, we gave them their liberty. The parents, however, appeared not yet satisfied respecting the safety of their young ones, for a short time after they were observed in the act of carrying one of them away; they were bearing it between them at about the elevation of a foot and a half from the ground, and in this manner were seen to carry it above fifty yards, namely, from the spot where the young birds were set at liberty, to the end of a gravel path, where they entered a clump of fir trees. In what manner the parents supported the nestling was not very apparent, as the observers did not like to follow too quickly, lest the old birds should relinquish their burden; but from the close vicinity of the three during their flight, it appeared as if they must have upheld it by means of their beaks. The other nestlings had apparently been conveyed away in the same manner, as none of them were to be found.' I remember myself several years ago going a mile at night to release some young Greenfinches from a cage in which I had seen the old birds feeding them the day before.

Their flight is quick, strong, and undulated, performed by two or three rapid flaps of the wings, which are then closed, and a sweep follows, down, and then up. They sometimes wheel about for some little time before alighting, but often settle down abruptly, and set to work in search of food. If alarmed, they fly up to the highest parts of any trees that may be near, from whence they drop again, when the danger appears to be removed.

Their food consists of wheat, barley, and other grain, and seeds, those of the hawthorn occasionally, and green weeds, such as the turnip, charlock, dandelion, groundsel, and chickweed; and in the spring the buds of trees are picked off, and the larvæ of different insects also consumed; all these, as well as insects themselves, form their 'bill of fare:' with the latter the young are fed. Various mineral substances are swallowed to assist the process of digestion. The husks of corn are ground off before being swallowed.

Their note, which Meyer likens to the word 'tway,' is tolerably full and mellow, and is uttered in the summer from the topmost spray of a hedge, or some tree a little higher than others, as well as on the wing; but there is not any approach to a song until the spring, generally about the middle of April, but earlier or later according to the season, and only to a trifling extent even then; but they are able to learn the notes of other birds.

Nidification begins generally in April, or even earlier: the work has been known to have been completed by the 26th. of March.

The nest is pretty well compacted, and much more so in some instances than in others. It is composed of small roots, twigs, moss, and straws, and lined with finer materials of the same kinds, mingled, as the case may be, with thistle-down, feathers, and hair: one was built last year in the trellis-work near the drawing-room of Nafferton Vicarage, a few yards from that of the Spotted Flycatcher; but, though undisturbed, it was not resorted to again this year, as was that of its near neighbour. It is placed in various situations—a low bush, or an evergreen, the ivy against a wall, or between the branches of a tree. Many nests are often found in propinquity to each other in the same shrubbery; more than one sometimes even in the same bush.

The eggs, from four to six, or even seven in number, are of a bluish or purple reddish white, spotted with darker purple, grey, and blackish brown, streaked also in general more or less with black. They differ much in size, shape, and colour; sometimes the whole surface is mottled over, and again, there have been known no markings at all: the smaller end is rather pointed.

Two broods are frequently reared in the season. The young, if fledged, fly off in a body from the nest, if approached. The young of the Spotted Flycatcher I have seen do the same, though they had never flown before, on my going to the nest to place a young orphan Greenfinch in it, with a view to its being fed with them as a foster-brother.

Male; weight nearly eight drachms; length six inches and a quarter, or rather over; bill, pale reddish brown, darker at the point, the back of the lower bill tinged with red; iris, dark hazel: between it and the bill is a dusky mark, which also extends across the forehead. Head on the sides, yellowish green, inclining to ash-colour, and on the crown, neck on the back, which also inclines to ash-colour, and nape, yellowish green, the edges of the feathers greyish; chin, throat, and breast, yellowish green, but lighter than the back, and with more yellow, much the most so on the lower part; on the sides it is tinged with greenish grey; back, yellowish green, the edges of the feathers greyish, but lower down with more yellow.

The wings are broad, and expand to the width of ten inches and a quarter; the first, second, and third quill feathers are nearly equal and the longest, the fourth nearly as long; greater wing coverts, greenish grey; lesser wing coverts, the same; primaries, brownish black with light grey tips, and yellowish white inner edges, excepting towards the end; those next the body are greyish; tertiaries, greenish grey. Tail, rather short and somewhat forked, yellow for three-fourths of its length, the remainder brownish black, edged with yellow or yellowish grey, but the four middle feathers are nearly all brownish black, being tinged with green at the base only; under tail coverts, light yellowish white. Legs and toes, pale reddish brown; claws, rather dusky.

The female is about six inches in length; bill, less robust than in the male. Her general plumage is much the same, but considerably duller, and with none of the bright yellow. The back has more brown, of an uniform faint reddish tint. The wings expand to the width of ten inches; the yellow markings on the quill feathers are less bright than in the male; lesser wing coverts, grey.

The young at first are greenish grey above, and streaked with dark brown on the throat and breast. As the bird advances in age it varies much in brightness or dullness of colouring, the more advanced being almost pure greenish yellow above, the others tinged with brown, and the sides of the head being more or less grey. Bill, pale brown above, pale reddish beneath, the tip brown; in the female it is still paler than in the male, and smaller. Neck in front, greyish brown; breast, greyish brown above, below greyish brown, as are its sides; back, dull olive colour, the centre of each feather faintly tinged with brown. Lesser wing coverts, brown; primaries, dusky brown, their outer margins greenish yellow, but narrow, forming only lines when closed, instead of a full mark. Legs and toes, pale brownish red.

# HAWFINCH.

GROSBEAK. COMMON GROSBEAK.
BLACK-THROATED GROSBEAK. HAW GROSBEAK.

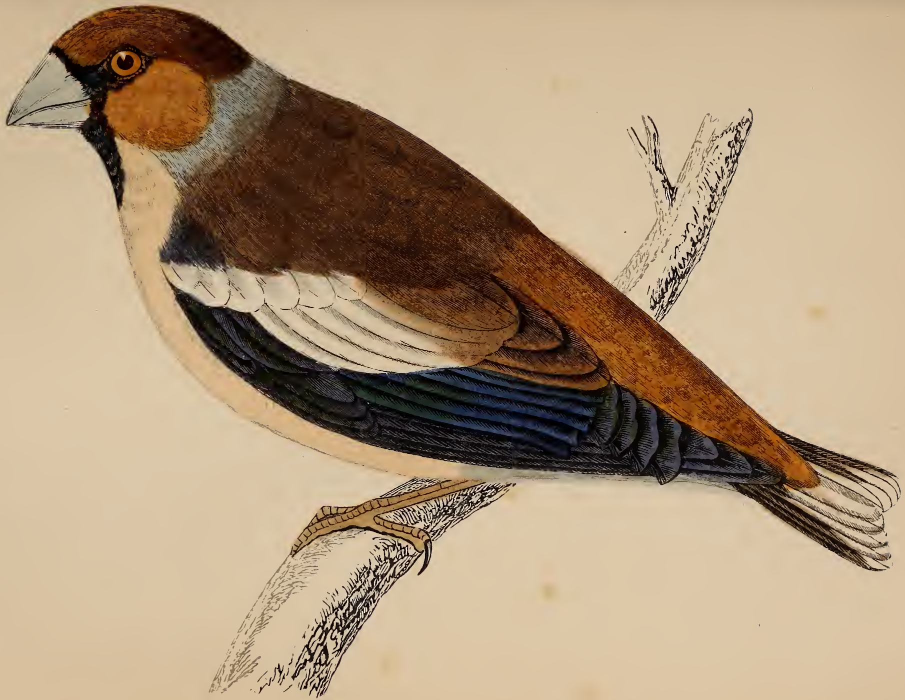
| | |
|---|---|
| *Coccothraustes vulgaris,* | FLEMING. GOULD. |
| *Loxia coccothraustes,* | LINNÆUS. LATHAM. |
| *Fringilla coccothraustes,* | JENYNS. TEMMINCK |

*Coccothraustes*—*Coccos*—A berry. *Thrauö*—To break.
*Vulgaris*—Common.

THE Hawfinch occurs throughout Europe, in Germany, France, Belgium, Spain, and Italy, as likewise, though more rarely, in Sweden, Denmark, Siberia, and Russia. In Asia also, according to Temminck, who includes it among the birds of Japan, and in Africa, in Egypt, where Sonnini relates that he saw it.

In Yorkshire, specimens have been met with near Sheffield, Killinbeck, near Leeds; Scriven, near Knaresborough; Halifax, York, Huddersfield, Barnsley, and Doncaster, in the West-Riding; and a few are generally killed every winter near Bridlington, in the East-Riding.

One was shot in the vicarage garden of Coddenham, Suffolk, about the middle of January, 1850; so John Longe, Esq. has informed me. In 1849, the Rev. R. P. Alington shot one in his garden at Swinhope Rectory, Lincolnshire, and heard of several others in the same neighbourhood. He says of the one that he procured, 'It came to feed on the gravel walk: upon my appearance, it would fly to the topmost branch of a neighbouring tree, and before I could get within gun-shot, would fall like a stone among the laurel bushes, from whence I at last found it so difficult to dislodge it, that I was obliged to get a man on the other side with a



HAWFINCH.

stick to drive it out.' Two or three have been shot at Notting Hill, near London; one near Esher, Surrey. N. Rowe, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, says that he has been informed that this species is common in Stowe Park, Buckinghamshire, the seat of His Grace the Duke of Buckingham; and James Dalton, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, has informed me that it breeds there, as it also does in Epping Forest, in considerable numbers, and at Walthamstow, in Essex, and the neighbourhood of Woburn, in Bedfordshire, as Mr. G. B. Clarke, of that place, writes me word; but he says that they are there most seen in the winter, when they come to feed on the seeds of the hawthorn and the holly, their 'Christmas Tree.' On one occasion they have been known to breed near Oxford.

At Windsor, and at Bradfield, near Reading, Berkshire, it remains throughout the year, as the Rev. Thomas Stevens, of that place, told me, and has also been known to breed regularly in the grounds of Lord Clifden, at Roehampton, and near Tenterden, Bexley, Dartford, Maidstone, and Penshurst, in Kent. It has also been seen in Badminton Park, Gloucestershire, the seat of His Grace the Duke of Beaufort; Tring and Berkhampstead, in Hertfordshire; Chipping Norton and Wytham, in Oxfordshire; Goodwood and Rye, in Sussex, in plenty near the latter in 1849. Selborne, in Hampshire; Repton and Melbourne, in Derbyshire; Taverham, where one was taken alive in a pigeon-house, and Yarmouth, Norfolk; Ormskirk, in Lancashire; and once at Woodside, near Carlisle, in Cumberland; also occasionally in Gloucestershire, Shropshire, Dorsetshire, Devonshire, Cornwall, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire.

In Ireland, a few have been met with in various parts; at Hillsborough and Tollymore Park, the seat of Lord Roden, in the county of Down; at Cittadella and Ardrum, in the county of Cork, the former in the winter of 1844; near Milltown, in the county of Kerry, at the end of October, 1830; and during the winter of 1844, the species was obtained in different parts of that county; but in the Phœnix Park, near Dublin, where the hawthorn trees are both among the finest and in the greatest numbers that I have ever seen, they appear to be procurable in small numbers every winter.

In Scotland, one or two have been killed in Dumfriesshire. In Orkney and Shetland it appears to be unknown.

It is with us both a permanent resident and an occasional visitant, the former in some parts of the country, the latter in others. It arrives in these cases at the beginning of winter, and is said to depart again in April.

They seem to be extremely shy birds, but are capable of being kept in the cage. In winter they are found less timid, either subdued by the effects of hunger and cold, or as arrived from foreign parts where they have been less exposed to danger from man. They generally perch upon the highest branch of a tree, or upon some open bough, from whence they are able to keep a good look-out.

They feed on the seeds, fruits, and berries of various trees—the hornbeam, plum, plane, pine, cherry, laurel, holly, and hawthorn, and do some damage among peas. With their strong beaks they make their way through the hardest shells.

Their song is described as low, pleasant, and plaintive, and as being heard even in winter in fine weather. In confinement they have been known to learn the notes of other birds, and have been observed to make a grinding noise with their beaks, as is done by some of the Parrots.

They pair about the middle of April, and in a week or two begin to build.

I have been favoured by St. Aubin Molesworth St. Aubin, Esq., with the nest and egg of this bird, which were taken in the parish of Beenham, in the county of Berks.: it is entirely composed of lichens and fine roots. It is frequently placed in a thorn bush, or holly tree, as also in oaks, the horse chesnut, apple, and fir trees of the different species, at a height of twenty-five or thirty feet from the ground, often in a very exposed situation. It is variously made of small twigs, such as those of the oak and honeysuckle, intermixed with fragments of lichens, in greater or less abundance. The lining consists of fine roots, vegetable fibres, and a little hair, with feathers, according to Montagu. It is not firmly compacted, towards which effect perhaps the principal material contributes.

The eggs are from four to six in number, of a pale olive green, spotted with blackish brown, and irregularly streaked with dusky grey; some are much less marked than others, and some are of a uniform pale green.

The young are hatched about the third week in May, and as soon as they are able to provide for themselves, says Mr. Doubleday, they unite with the old birds in flocks, varying in numbers from fifteen or twenty to one hundred or even to two hundred individuals. In this manner they remain through the winter, and only separate at the approach of spring.

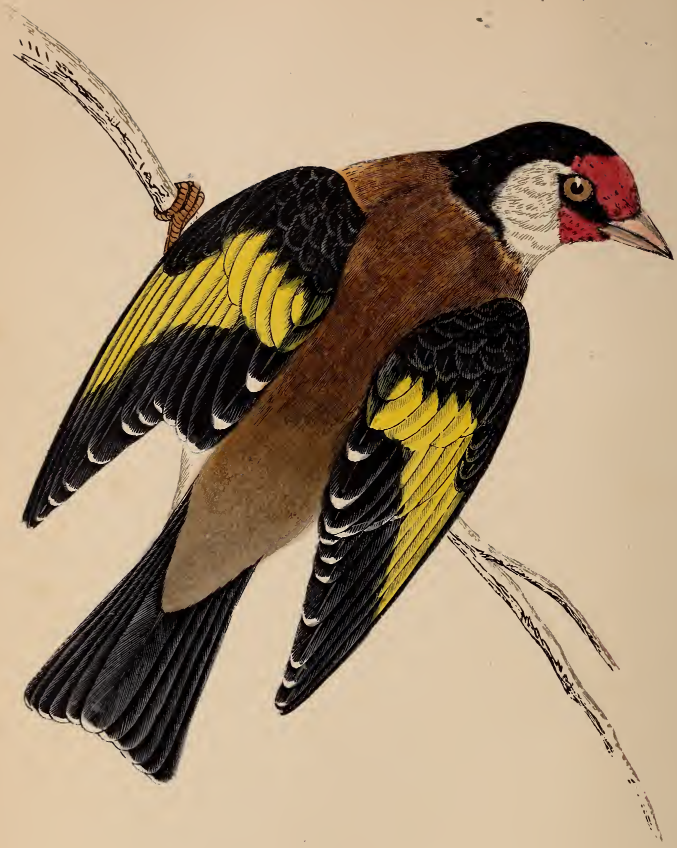
Male; weight, about two ounces; length, a trifle over seven inches; bill, pale brownish red, bluish in summer, the tip dusky: between it and the eye is a black streak, meeting the black of the throat in a point. Iris, greyish white: the black mark just extends behind it. Head, yellowish brown, paler on the forehead and the sides than on the crown; the neck behind is crossed by a broad band of ash-colour, on the sides it is pale brown; nape, fawn-colour; chin and throat, velvet black; breast, pale brown; back above, dark chesnut brown, next brownish grey, changing downwards to yellowish brown.

The wings, which are of the width of eleven inches and a half, are broad; the first quill feather is a little shorter than the second, as is also the third, the fourth a little shorter still, and the rest gradually diminish in length; greater wing coverts, greyish white, and those next the body yellowish brown; lesser wing coverts, black, or blackish brown, some of them tipped with white; primaries, bluish black, the outer ones with a white spot on the inner web near the middle, the others greyish white: the fifth and four succeeding ones are curiously formed in the shape of a bill-hook or battle-axe at the end; the other quill feathers nearer the body are square at the end. The secondaries, which are long, have the greater part of the inner web greyish white; some of the tertiaries rich chesnut brown. Tail, short and black; the outside feather on each side is black at the base, and on the outer web, and half of the inner web, white; the next four feathers on each side have a large white spot on the end of both webs, the base black, the proportion of white diminishing on each feather; the middle ones are grey towards the end, and tinged with red on part of the inner web, the tips white: the two centre feathers are rather shorter than the rest. Upper tail coverts, yellowish brown; under tail coverts, white; legs, toes, and claws, pale brownish red.

The female is in length rather under seven inches; she is like the male in appearance, but paler in colour; the black at the base of the bill, and between it and the eye, is less conspicuous; the different colours about the head, crown, and neck on the back, are less distinct and more blended together; the black on the chin is also less in size. The wing coverts have the white colour more mixed with brown; the tertiaries have their outer webs bluish grey.

The young bird is said to have the bill pale brownish red; head, neck, and nape, pale yellowish olive brown; throat, yellowish, bounded by a small line of brown spots, indicative of the future black patch; the breast, dull white, the feathers, especially on the sides, tipped with small brown spots. The bar on the wings is less apparent than in the old birds.

Varieties occur which are pure white, some yellowish white, or greyish; others with the wings or tail white, and others with white feathers here or there.



GOLDFINCH.

# GOLDFINCH.

GOLDIE. GOLDSPINK. THISTLE-FINCH. KING HARRY.
RED-CAP. PROUD-TAIL.

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|---|---|
| *Carduelis elegans,* | MACGILLIVRAY. |
| *Fringilla carduelis,* | LINNÆUS. LATHAM. |

*Carduelis*—A bird that feeds on thistles. *Carduus*—A thistle.
*Elegans*—Elegant.

THIS lovely bird is one of the most beautifully-plumaged of our native species; its form at the same time is neat and graceful, and its gay exterior is accompanied by gentleness of nature, docility of habit, and sweetness of song. It need therefore hardly be added that it is a deserved favourite, and one only regrets to see it ever otherwise than in the cheerful enjoyment of its natural liberty. Individuals have been known to live ten years in captivity, continuing in song the greater part of each year. Willughby mentions one which lived in confinement for twenty-three years.

In Europe it occurs from Siberia and Sweden to Greece, France, Spain, Crete, and Italy; in Asia also, in Asia Minor.

In this country it is found in sufficient plenty throughout England and Wales, as also in the south of Scotland, but is certainly not so numerous as formerly. Whomever else 'Free trade' may be beneficial to, it is not so to the Goldfinch; for 'Agricultural improvement,' necessitated thereby, cuts off with the tops of the thistles, so ready otherwise to run to seed, the harvest which the bird would fain reap in the autumn and the winter. Those tracts, therefore, which still remain in their original and uncultivated state, and furnish accordingly the greater quantity of wild seed-bearing plants, are their most natural resort—the uncultivated common, the now almost extirpated warren, the chase, the moorland, and the wild waste of the mountain side.

In Scotland it is not uncommon in Aberdeenshire, and near Elgin, but is said to be rare in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, and to be so now in Linlithgowshire, though formerly very abundant there. It is an occasional visitant to Zetland.

In Ireland it occurs throughout the four provinces; but Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, has remarked how capricious it is in its comings and goings.

They abide with us throughout the year, but roam about the country, and appear to be observed in the greatest numbers together in the spring: the flocks generally consist of not more than twenty or thirty.

In procuring its food, the Goldfinch often permits your near approach, seeming regardless of it, intent upon its one main object. It is very pleasant to watch them fluttering over the stems of the thistle, hanging on in various attitudes about them, and scattering about the down in picking out the seeds. On a sudden the little flock, probably the family of the summer, flit off, twittering their lively notes.

They are easily tamed, and have been taught by those who might employ their time much more profitably, to perform various tricks. They are sometimes seen in large, and sometimes in very small, but generally in moderate-sized flocks, and they also associate occasionally with Linnets. Severe winters prove fatal to many. In their wild state two instances have been known of the female pairing with the Greenfinch, and rearing the young, and in confinement with the Siskin and the Canary. They roost in trees.

The late William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, records that Randal Burough, Esq., of the county of Clare, had two tame Goldfinches which were allowed not only to fly about the room, but also through the open window. The winter was beginning to be severe, and the food suitable for small birds consequently scarce, when one day the two birds brought with them a stranger of their own species, who made bold to go into the two cages that were always left open, and regale himself on the hospitality of his new friends, and then took his departure. He returned again, and brought others with him, so that in a few days half-a-dozen were enjoying the food provided for them. The window was now kept up, and the open cages, with plenty of seed, were placed on a table close to it, instead of on the sill as before. The birds soon learned to come into the room without fear, and as their numbers had continued gradually to increase, there was soon a flock of not less than twenty visiting the apartment daily, and perfectly undisturbed by the presence of the members of the family. As the inclemency of the winter decreased, the number of the birds gradually diminished, until at length, when the severe weather had quite passed away, there remained none except the original pair.

Their food consists of the seeds of the teazel, the plantain, knapweed, chickweed, groundsel, ragwort, hemp, the thistle, the hawthorn, corn, fir-cones, grasses, and various herbaceous plants: occasionally also of beetles and other insects, which are triturated with small gravel. The young birds are fed for a time with caterpillars and insects.

The note, as is so well known, is very sweet and varied. It is commenced about the end of March, and is continued without much interruption till July.

The nest is placed in orchard and other trees, especially those which are evergreen, in bushes, and in some instances in hedges, and at times as much as thirty feet from the ground: it is composed externally of grass, moss, lichens, small twigs, and roots, or any other appropriate substances. Inside it is elaborately interwoven with wool and hair, lined with the down of willows and various plants, and sometimes a few or more leaves or feathers. It is very neatly finished, and Bolton says is completed in three days.

The eggs, four or five in number, are bluish white, or pale greyish blue, sometimes tinged with brown, and are slightly spotted with greyish purple and brown, with occasionally a dark streak or two.

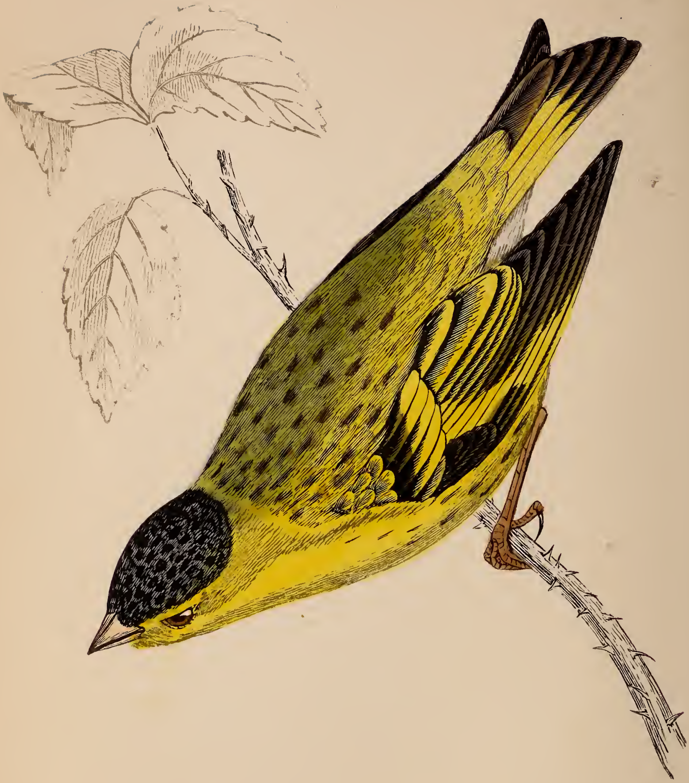
Male; length, five inches; bill, whitish tinged with red, the point above and below, blackish brown: it is margined at its base with black to the eye, which is dusky brown. Forehead, crimson, and over the eyes; head on the crown and back, black, on the sides white; neck on the back, black, forming a semicircle towards the front; nape, buff brown; chin, crimson; throat, white, extending backwards to the black, and succeeded by brownish white: breast, pale fulvous brown and whitish; back, darker buff brown, lighter buff brown lower down.

The wings extend to the width of nine inches; greater wing coverts, yellow; lesser wing coverts, black; primaries, black, the inner half yellow on the outer webs, except that of the first, the tips white; the second quill feather is the longest, but only slightly over the first, which is a little longer than the third; tertiaries, with a spot of white at the tip; greater and lesser under wing coverts, white. The tail, which is black tipped with white, is slightly forked and rather short; the two outer feathers have a large oval-shaped white spot on the inner web; upper tail coverts, greyish white. Legs and toes, pale dusky brown; claws, dusky brown.

The female is not so brilliant in colour; length, rather over four inches and three quarters; the head has less crimson on the crown, and it is frequently mingled with black, and the black is mixed with grey and brown; the white on the side of the neck is tinged with brown. The chin has less crimson; the breast duller white on the lower part. The wings expand to the width of a little over eight inches and three quarters; the white tips of the feathers are tinged with brown, and the black is less deep; lesser wing coverts, brown; the tail is not so bright a black.

The young present, in some respects, the same general appearance as the old birds, but the colours are fainter. The bill, pale pink; the head, on the crown, has the black much mixed with grey, and the rest brown; the black comes out about the end of September, or beginning of October, and the red at the end of that month. Neck on the back, and nape, greyish brown; the breast, brownish grey.

Montagu says that a variety is sometimes taken with white spots under the throat. In confinement varieties occur, black, black and white, and white.



SISKIN.

# SISKIN

## ABERDEVINE

| | |
|---|---|
| *Carduelis spinus,* | MACGILLIVRAY. |
| *Fringilla spinus,* | LINNÆUS. LATHAM. |

*Carduelis*—A bird that feeds on thistles. *Carduus*—A thistle
*Spinus*—...............? *Spinus*—A thorn.?

THOUGH inferior to the Goldfinch in beauty of plumage, the Siskin is its equal in pleasing neatness—the one, as it were, embodying the striking beauty of the orange, and the other the more chastened and sober hue of the lemon, in the general tone of its colour.

It inhabits Russia, Norway, and Sweden, Austria, France, Holland, and Italy, and has been once met with in Corfu; it is found also in Asia, in Japan, according to M. Temminck.

In this country it is but locally distributed, and therefore an uncommon bird, though found in tolerable plenty where, or rather when, it occurs. In Yorkshire it is tolerably common in some winters near Sheffield, Halifax, Doncaster, Barnsley, Hebden-Bridge, and York, as also in the neighbourhood of Bridlington. When at school, at Bromsgrove, in Worcestershire, I and my schoolfellows used to shoot several of these birds out of pretty considerable flocks, which used occasionally to frequent the gardens near the town, and more generally the alder trees by the side of Charford brook. I just missed seeing them in April this year, 1852, in the same neighbourhood, namely, at Stoke Prior, lower down the said stream, where my friend the Rev. Harcourt Aldham, vicar of that parish, had seen a flock several times just before I visited him. They were, as usual, hanging about the alder trees which fringe the borders of the brook. The Rev. R. P. Alington has only known one near Swinhope, Lincolnshire, which he saw in the marshes. In Surrey, Cambridgeshire, Sussex, Salop, Dorset, Devon, Suffolk, Norfolk, Durham, Northumberland, Lancashire, and Cornwall, they are more or less frequently met with.

In Scotland they are, on the whole, rare, though they are believed to breed there, and considerable numbers have occasionally been observed in Edinburghshire, Perthshire, Selkirkshire, and East Lothian.

In Ireland it is also an occasional visitor, and has been noticed near Belfast, Ballymena, Lough Mask, Armagh, Rockland, Mertoun, Cork, Tanderagee, Antrim, Ranelagh, and Dublin, and in the counties of Wicklow, Cavan, Wexford, and Londonderry.

The Siskin, with us, migrates from the north to the south in the autumn, leaving in September, and returning in April. A few have been known to breed in the latter portion of the island, and more in the former. Mr. Yarrell mentions two such instances near London, and Mr. Meyer two others, both in Coombe wood, in the same neighbourhood. Near Lancaster, several pairs remained and bred in the summer of 1836. In Scotland a few pairs breed in different parts every season, and have been noticed at New Abbey, in Galloway, Killin, Inverary, the Vale of Alford, Aberdeenshire and Argyleshire, Camperdown, near Dundee, and on the borders of Lough Fine.

They are companionable birds with each other, going in flocks, in association also not unfrequently with others of their 'country cousins,' the Linnets of the smaller and the larger species. In confinement they shew great affection for their mates, and pair with the Canary. They are almost constantly in motion, both in their wild and confined state.

Their food consists of the seeds of the alder, the sycamore, the beech, the broom, the thistle, the dandelion, the ragwort, and those of other plants and trees.

Their song is sweet, and much esteemed; and a pleasant thing it is to hear this 'Bonnie wee thing' twittering its small note, as it hangs in every variety of attitude on the alder, or flits from bough to bough, or tree to tree, in search of its accustomed food.

The nest is placed in trees, at only a short or moderate height from the ground, and is composed of stalks of grass, and small roots and fibres, moss and lichens, lined with hair, rabbits' fur, thistle-down, wool, or a few feathers.

The eggs are pale greenish white, spotted around the thicker end with purple, and a few brown dots.

Incubation lasts fourteen days; the young are fledged in fifteen more, and are able to leave the nest at the end of the third week.

Male; length, four inches and three quarters; bill, light grey above, and dull white below, the tip dusky; in summer it is orange brown: it is rather long and pointed, and much attenuated towards the tip, which is slightly curved downwards—a sort of rudiment, as it were, of that of the Creeper; the upper mandible extends a little beyond the lower one. Iris, dusky brown: a yellow band extends over and from it backwards, and in front of it, to the bill, is black. Head on the back and sides, yellowish green, streaked with black; crown, black; neck on the back and nape, yellowish green, streaked with black; in front, yellow. Chin and throat, black, when fully adult; breast, yellowish green, whitish at the lower part, and greyish white on the sides, each feather with a black central streak. Back above, yellowish green, tinged with grey, each feather having a dusky streak in its centre; below, yellow.

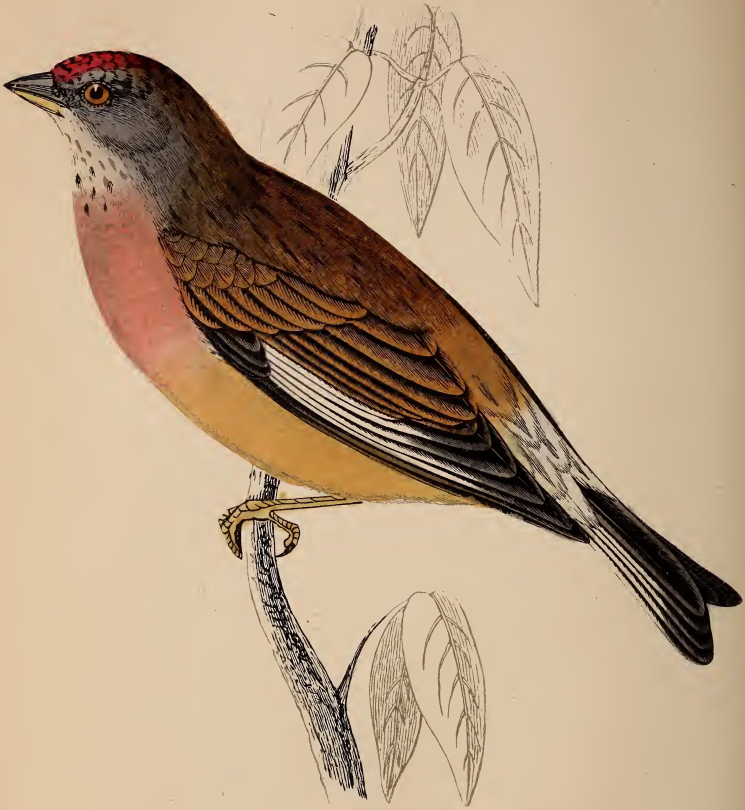
The wings, which extend to within half an inch of the end of the tail, expand to the width of nine inches; the first three quills are of nearly equal length and the longest in the wing, the first being rather the longest of the three; the fourth an eighth shorter than the third; greater wing coverts, yellow at the base, black at the tip; lesser wing coverts, black, greenish yellow at the end, forming a broad band of that colour across the wing. Primaries, dusky black, yellow at the base and on the outer edges; secondaries and tertiaries, dusky black, with olive-coloured edges. The tail, which is slightly forked, is yellow at the base, black at the end, the edges of the feathers narrowly edged with lighter colour; the two middle feathers brownish black; upper tail coverts, yellow, or yellowish brown; under tail coverts, greyish white, tinged with yellow, the shafts dark. Legs, toes, and claws, pale brown, with a reddish tinge.

After the autumnal moult the yellow is less brilliant, and the black of the head is obscured with brown.

Female; length, not quite four inches and a half. The bill is pale brown above and lighter beneath. The yellow streak over the eye is very pale. Head on the sides, pale yellowish brown; crown, neck on the back, and nape, light greyish green, each feather with a brownish black central mark; chin, throat, and breast above, greenish white, tinged with yellow, in the middle bluish white, below greyish white, each feather with a longitudinal streak of blackish; back, light greyish green, tinged with blue, each feather with a brownish black central streak. The yellow on the wing feathers is paler than in the male. Tail, yellow, but less extensively, and the black at the end is tinged with brown; under tail coverts, white, with dark shaft streaks. Toes, light brown.

The young are at first covered with black down. The male, after the first moult, has the black on the head margined with brown, and the colours are less bright than when mature.

If kept in confinement the Siskin sometimes varies to white or dusky, and Bechstein says that in very old males the whole breast becomes black.



LINNET.

# LINNET.

BROWN LINNET. COMMON LINNET.
GREATER REDPOLE. RED-BREASTED LINNET. GREY LINNET.
ROSE LINNET. WHIN LINNET.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Linaria cannabina,* | MACGILLIVRAY. |
| *Fringilla cannabina,* | LINNÆUS. LATHAM. |
| " *linota,* | LATHAM. |
| *Linota cannabina,* | PRINCE OF MUSIGNANO. YARRELL. |

*Linaria—Linum*—Flax. *Cannabina*—Belonging to canes or reeds.
*Canna*—A cane or reed.

THIS species is an inhabitant of Europe, being found in Denmark, Russia, Norway, and Sweden; France, Spain, Italy, Holland, Germany, Crete, Corfu, and other islands of the Mediterranean, and the Levant; as also in Asia, throughout Asia Minor, Persia, and in Japan, according to Temminck.

In this country it is generally distributed throughout the year in England, Scotland, Ireland, Orkney, and Zetland.

The Linnet is easily reared from the nest.

Towards the end of autumn individuals collect together in flocks, and these again as winter advances, further unite, often to their own destruction; a too dense crowding together proving fatal to them as well as to their superiors in the scale of creation. I remember picking up nine which I once shot in Berkshire; and I saw in the newspaper a few years since, that, 'si rite recordor,' upwards of a hundred and forty were killed at one fell discharge. Sometimes they join with other birds of the Finch tribe, but generally keep to themselves. In spring, the flocks break up, and leave, for the most part, the cultivated districts of the country, to which they had betaken themselves, for the more hilly and mountainous regions of the north; rejoicing in the wild heather, the gorse, the broom, and the sloe. A few build in the south, but not farther than Thetford, Barham, and Calford, Norfolk, so far as I am aware, where Alfred Newton, Esq. has found the nests. In winter they may often be seen on the sea shore, as well as in the stubble fields.

The Rev. J. Pemberton Bartlett, curate of Fordingbridge, Hampshire, has sent me the following anecdote of a Linnet. He says, 'In passing a low furze bush, my attention was attracted to a bird which fluttered and fell a few feet before me, as if in a fit. My first impulse was to step quickly forward and pick it up, the former of which I did, but when within about two feet of it, it rose and fluttered on a few yards further. Thinking it was wounded I again attempted to pick it up, when it again appeared to receive a fresh amount of strength, and made another intoxicated sort of progress of a few yards. This it did several times, and I began to doubt if I should catch it after all; when at last, to my great surprise, just as I was near enough to 'put some salt on its tail,' it rose up and flew away, twittering, (laughing at me as I found afterwards,) like the pertest and strongest Linnet in the world. At first I was puzzled to account for its very eccentric behaviour, but it struck me that possibly, like the Partridge, it might have performed the antics described to decoy me from its nest. I therefore returned, and searched the furze bush, where, sure enough, I found it with five eggs, which were still warm from the heat of that body which the faithful little bird had exposed for their preservation; for had I been so disposed, I could, with my stick, without difficulty, have knocked her down. This trait in the character of the Linnet was new to me, and delighted me much.'

The flight of this bird is quick and undulated—a series of curves performed by the alternate flappings and cessation of the motion of the wings. In flocks they glide and wheel about in a manner which, to the ornithologist, is pleasing to behold. On the ground, too, they are quick and sprightly in their movements, advancing by short leaps.

Its food consists of the seeds of various plants—the dandelion, the sow-thistle, the thistle, rape, flax, and such like.

The note is soft, mellow, varied, and sweet, so that it is valued, unfortunately for it, as a cage bird, possessing, as it also does, the power to imitate the notes of others, even of the Nightingale; nay, to utter distinct sounds and articulate words. A fine voice has proved the ruin of many, and not only of birds. Meyer suggests that its name of 'Linnet' is derived from its ordinary call.

The nest is commonly placed in heath, grass, furze, or gorse, and is neatly constructed, being formed of small twigs and stalks of grass, intermixed with moss and wool, and lined with hair and feathers. It is occasionally placed in a bush or tree, and has been known at a height of ten or twelve feet from the ground.

The eggs are from four to six in number, of a bluish white colour, spotted, most so at the larger end, with purple grey and reddish brown; some are of a reddish black colour without spots, and some, exceptional ones, have been known pure white.

The young are usually able to fly by the end of May, and there are mostly two broods in the season.

Male; length, five inches and three quarters; bill, dusky above, pale greyish blue beneath, the tip darker; iris, deep brown: over it is an indistinct line of greyish yellow, and another below it. Forehead, red, the feathers tipped with greyish brown; head, streaked on the crown with greyish brown and yellowish grey, the central part of each feather being of the former colour; on the sides, yellowish brown grey; neck in front, yellowish grey, streaked with greyish brown or light reddish brown; chin and throat, a mixture of brown and grey; breast, brown or dull red on the upper part in winter, bright red in spring—sometimes the red colour entirely fades out in the winter—the feathers are broadly margined with yellowish grey; on the sides it is yellowish grey, the feathers streaked with brown, which nearly wears off in summer; lower down it is light brownish grey, palest on the middle. Back, deep reddish brown, the central parts of the feathers darker, their edges yellowish grey.

The wings expand to the width of nine inches and three quarters; greater and lesser wing coverts, reddish brown, the central parts of the feathers darker, their edges yellowish grey; in the summer they are wholly reddish brown; primaries, brownish black, margined externally, excepting towards the end, with white, the five first broadly so, forming a conspicuous mark on the wing: the first and second quills are equal in length, the first sometimes the longest, the third scarcely shorter, the fourth a quarter of an inch shorter than the third. Secondaries and tertiaries, brownish black, margined externally with yellowish brown, internally with greyish white. Tail, brownish black, the middle feathers, which are shorter than the others, and make it forked, are margined with brownish yellow, the five side ones edged externally, nearly to the tip, with white, and internally more broadly with the same; upper tail coverts, brownish black, margined with brownish yellow; underneath, the tail is barred with grey and white; under tail coverts, whitish, their central part dusky. Legs and toes, yellowish brown; claws, blackish.

Female; length, five inches and a quarter; neck in front, yellowish grey, tinged with red; throat, streaked on the sides with dusky brown; breast, yellowish grey, slightly tinged with red; back, streaked with dusky brown and greyish yellow, lighter lower down; in winter greyish or greyish white. The wings extend to the width of nine inches and a half; greater and lesser wing coverts, dull brown, edged with lighter, fading off downwards into whitish, and streaked on the sides with dusky brown; primaries, brownish black, narrowly edged on the outside with white. The tail, brownish black, edged externally with light yellowish brown; the outer with greyish white, the inner webs greyish white for half their length; upper tail coverts, dusky brown, the outer edges of the feathers yellowish, the inner whitish; under tail coverts, yellowish grey, with a blackish mark on the centre of the feathers.

The young at first resemble the female. The bill is pale greyish brown above, and pale bluish pink beneath; breast, greyish yellow, streaked with brown, excepting on the middle; the back, yellowish grey, streaked with dusky; toes, pale brownish pink; claws, brown.

Alfred Newton, Esq., of Magdalene College, Cambridge, thus describes one in the 'Zoologist,' pages 1497-1498, which was only just able to fly:—'Bill, pale brown, the upper one the darkest; head and nape, dull white, each feather having a dark centre; neck in front and breast above, dull white, each feather tipped with dark brown; below, silvery white; back, dark brown, each feather margined with lighter. Greater and lesser wing coverts, dark brown, with buff tips, forming two conspicuous bars across the wing; quill feathers, greyish black, the inner ones with a broad buff outer edge; tail, greyish black, the feathers broadly edged with buff on their outer edges; upper tail coverts, dark brown, each feather margined with lighter; under tail coverts, silvery white, each feather with a dark stripe; legs and toes, pale brown; claws, black.'

Mr. George B. Clarke, of Woburn, Bedfordshire, has written me word that in the winter of the year 1845, a person of that town caught a male bird of this species nearly white. He kept it in confinement for nearly four years, during which period it became as white as snow. It was perfectly healthy, and was a good songster.

# REDPOLE.

LESSER REDPOLE. LESSER REDPOLE LINNET.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Linaria minor,* | MACGILLIVRAY. |
| *Fringilla linaria,* | LINNÆUS. LATHAM. |

*Linaria. Linum*—Flax. *Minor*—Lesser.

THE Lesser Redpole inhabits the north of Europe—Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and even the gelid Spitzbergen, Kamtschatka, Iceland, and Siberia—and as far south as Italy. In North America also it is plentiful, if indeed the species be the same; and, according to Temminck, is found in Asia, in Japan.

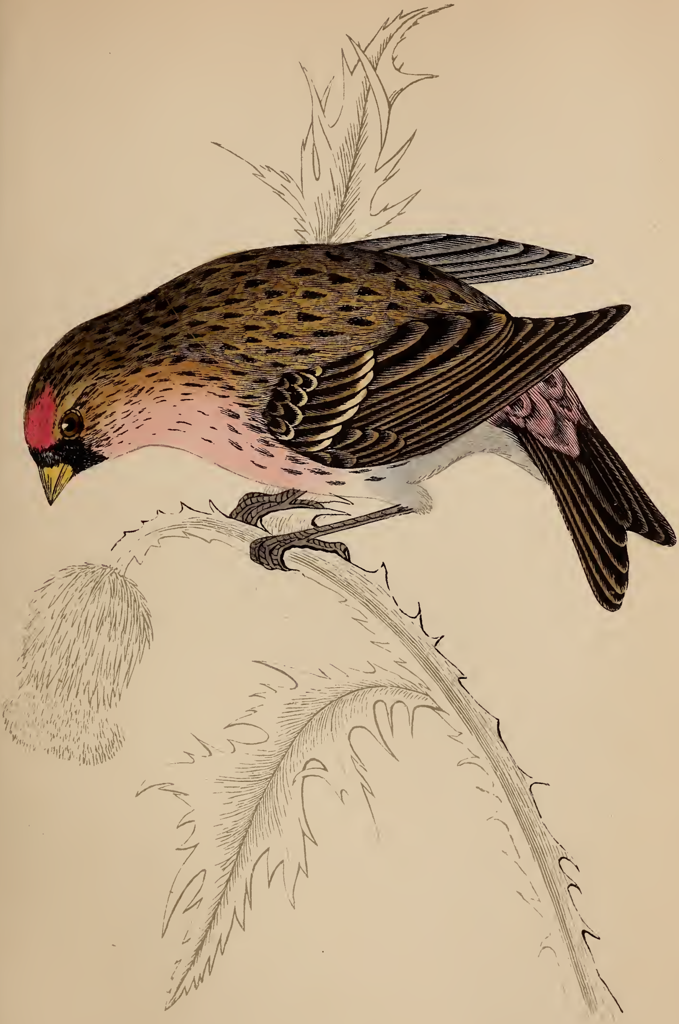
It is a denizen of the three kingdoms, and is found in Orkney, where a flock of about fifty were observed at Westness, in October, 1847.

It is resident throughout the year in the north of England, Ireland, and Scotland, but in the winter only, except in occasional instances, is seen in the south.

In winter they form large flocks, sometimes of thousands, and frequent woods where birch and alder trees are found. They are gentle and lively birds, and, unless scared, may be nearly approached: they will even return to the same trees immediately after having been fired at. They are very easily kept in confinement, and have been known to breed in the aviary of W. Roger, Esq., of Uxbridge. The female is very devoted to her young. One has been taken off the nest with the hand, and would not forsake it when released; she

> 'Could not bid the spot adieu;
> It was dear still 'midst her woes.'

Their food consists of seeds of the turnip, the thistle, the poppy, dandelion, mosses, and other plants; the birch, the



REDPOLE.

alder, and other trees; and they also destroy many buds, probably in seeking for insects hid among them. Like the Titmice, they assume a variety of interesting positions in hanging on the small and flexible boughs which bend beneath their light weight when gaining their livelihood. Audubon says of them, 'Few birds display a more affectionate disposition than the Little Redpole, and it was pleasing to see several on a twig feeding each other by passing a seed from bill to bill, one individual sometimes receiving from his two neighbours at the same time.' Occasionally they will descend to the ground in examination of the cones which have fallen down.

The flight of this little bird is particularly light, nimble, and buoyant.

Its voice is very clear and loud, and in the spring sweet and pleasing. If disturbed, it utters at first on rising a hurried chatter, and as it flies away a single and more prolonged note.

It breeds in various northern parts of the hilly districts of Scotland and the north of England, and many other places. The nest has in two recorded instances been known so far south as Halifax, in Yorkshire, namely, in 1835 and 1836; but the fact is that it is to be found plentifully in that district, and no doubt in many others, every summer. Once in Oxfordshire, by the Revs. Andrew and Henry Matthews; twice at Melbourne, in Derbyshire, by J. J. Briggs, Esq.; thrice near Downham, and twice near Thetford, in Norfolk, in 1846, by C. B. Hunter, Esq.; and at Bramerton, Costessey, and Mousehold Heath, near Norwich, as Mr. Henry Bellars has informed me. Once at Shanklin Chine, in the Isle of Wight, in May, 1843, by the Rev. C. A. Bury, and another was found there at the same time; also in Surrey, Nottinghamshire, and Warwickshire.

The young are hatched rather late, and are seldom able to fly before the end of June or beginning of July.

The nest is built in a low bush or tree, such as an alder, hawthorn, hazel, or willow, or in heather, and is fabricated of moss, stems of grass, and willow catkins, the latter being also used for the lining, as also feathers.

This species lays from four to six eggs: their colour is pale bluish green, spotted with orange brown, principally towards the larger end, with sometimes a few thin streaks of a darker colour—brown or black.

Male; weight, two drachms and a half; length, rather under five inches; bill, above, greyish brown, the lower one yellowish, the point blackish; iris, dusky brown. The forehead, which is dull red in winter, crimson in summer, is edged by a blackish band, the tips of the feathers being yellowish grey, and the rest black; crown, a mixture of dark and light brown, the centre of each feather being the darkest; neck in front, pale brown, with dark streaks; on the sides the same; chin, with a patch of black; throat in front, blackish, the tips of the feathers being yellowish grey in winter, and the rest black; on the sides it is pale brown with dark streaks; breast, pale brown, with dark streaks; in the summer fine red above and on the sides, fainter downwards, pale brownish white in winter: the sides the most streaked. Back, yellowish brown, streaked with blackish brown, darkest in summer; over the tail dull red, in summer much brighter.

The wings extend to the width of eight inches and three quarters; they are crossed by two yellowish brown bands, formed by the tips of the lesser coverts; greater and lesser wing coverts, a mixture of dark and light brown, the centre of each feather being the darkest, which in the former makes a conspicuous bar; primaries, dusky brown, margined with pale yellowish brown; the three first quill feathers are nearly equal in length, the second rather the longest, the fourth a little shorter than the third; secondaries, dusky brown, edged with pale yellowish brown; tertiaries, dusky brown, with broad edges of pale yellowish brown. Tail, dusky brown, with yellowish brown edges to the feathers; the middle ones are nearly half an inch shorter than the side ones; upper tail coverts, a mixture of dark and light brown, the centre of each feather being the darkest; under tail coverts, whitish, tinged with red in the summer; legs, toes, and claws, blackish brown.

Female; length, four inches and three quarters; the head has less red on the crown, and the black of the forehead is brownish; throat, brownish black. The breast has generally no red on it; the back has seldom any red on the lower part.

In the young, after the first moult, which takes place in November, the upper bill is greyish brown, the lower one dull yellow, with the tip dusky; the feathers about the base of the bill are dull blackish brown. Head on the sides, streaked with dusky and light yellowish brown: the red is partially assumed the following spring, but more so with age. Crown, dark brown, the feathers edged with yellowish red; neck in front and on the sides, streaked with dusky and light yellowish brown; throat, brown, the base of the feathers being black, and all the remainder light coloured; breast on the middle part and downwards, brownish white: in the following spring it acquires some red, but not so much as it afterwards attains. Back, streaked with dusky brown and dull light yellowish red.

The wings are crossed with two broad bands of the latter colour on the coverts; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dusky, the feathers edged with yellowish brown. Tail, dusky, the feathers edged with yellowish brown; under tail coverts, brownish white; claws, dusky.

The plate is from a design by the Rev. R. P. Alington.

# MEALY REDPOLE.

STONY REDPOLE. LESSER REDPOLE. LESSER REDPOLE LINNET

| | |
|---|---|
| *Linaria canescens,* | GOULD. |
| " *borealis,* | SELBY. |
| " *minor,* | SELBY. |
| *Fringilla borealis,* | TEMMINCK. |

*Linaria*. *Linum*—Flax. *Canescens*—Inclining to hoary colou

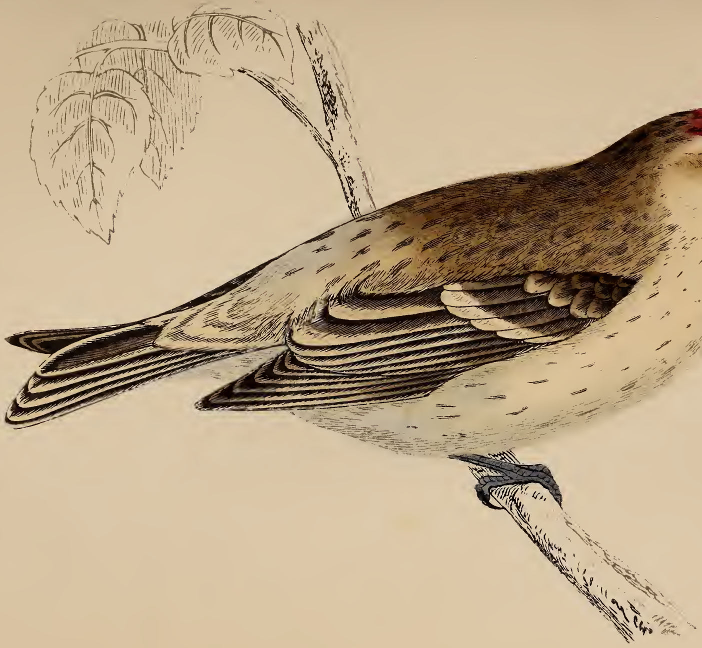
THERE have been doubts entertained as to the specific distinction of the present bird, but its individuality would seem to be established, and I 'tell the tale as it was told to me.'

It appears to occur both on the continents of Europe and America, as also in Asia; in Japan according to M. Temminck. It is an inhabitant of Greenland.

In England it is in general only rarely met with, but great numbers are said to have been taken in the neighbourhood of London about the year 1827, and also in 1829. In Yorkshire one was obtained near Sheffield, in the year 1839: in 1847 many were procured near Ipswich, Suffolk; most of them being males. Mr. Henry Doubleday, of Epping, has met with them at Colchester, and Mr. Pelerin at Oundle. W. P. Cocks, Esq. mentions one specimen met with in Cornwall, at Pennance. One was also obtained near Saffron Walden, in May, 1836; others have also been met with in other parts.

In Scotland two specimens have been procured; one in the neighbourhood of Bathgate, in the winter, and the other near Edinburgh.

The occurrence of this species is most frequent in winter, and it seems to be a migrant (perhaps only an occasional one) hither, the arctic and more northern regions being its native home



MEALY REDPOLE.

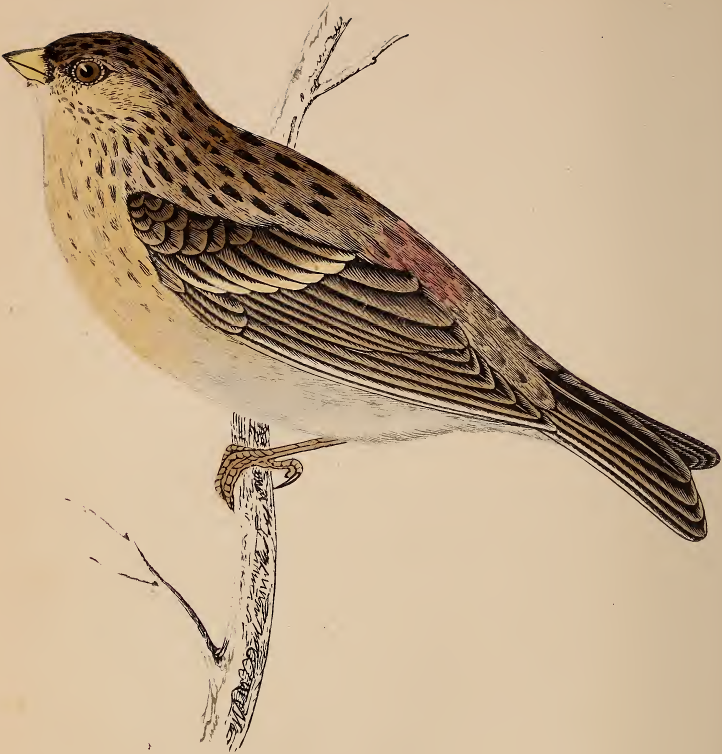
Its food is said to consist of the seeds of various forest trees.

The egg is described by Meyer as being pale greenish blue, sprinkled over with pale but distinct spots of a reddish brown colour, some of them inclining to lilac, chiefly confined to a zone around the larger end.

Male; length, five inches and a quarter or a third; bill, dull yellow, the upper part brown above; between the bill and the eye is a black space, dull in the winter; iris, dusky brown; the bristly feathers at the base of the bill are yellowish grey. Forehead and crown, red, duller in the autumn, and in winter the forehead is white or reddish, marked with a black band, and the crown dusky, the feathers tipped with yellowish grey, and some of them with red; the back of the head is pale reddish white, streaked with black in the centre of each feather; the sides, in the autumn, are slightly tinted with red, and greyish or brownish white in the winter, streaked with a darker brown. Neck, in front, red, in winter greyish white; on the back it and the nape are pale reddish white, tinged with brown and streaked with black in the centre of each feather; chin, almost black; throat, black, in the winter brownish black; breast, pale brownish or greyish white, streaked, excepting on the middle, with darker brown; it is pale red in spring and summer; above red, below and on the sides whitish, streaked and tinged with brown. Back, light yellowish brown, streaked with blackish, the feathers edged with whitish or dull reddish in winter; on the lower part it is red, but in the autumn greyish white, faintly tinged with red and streaked with brown.

The wings have the three first feathers almost equal, but the second the longest; greater wing coverts, dark brown, with broad ends of dull white, forming a conspicuous bar; lesser wing coverts, tipped with dull white, forming another short bar; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, brown, broadly margined with whitish grey, the latter more broadly than the former. The tail, long, dark greyish brown, the feathers broadly margined with white, the two centre ones are much shorter than the rest, making the tail deeply forked; upper tail coverts, greyish white with a few dark streaks, after the autumn slightly tinted with red; under tail coverts, pale greyish white, with a few dark brown streaks; legs and toes, dusky; claws, brownish black.

Female; the black before the eye is dull in winter; forehead, whitish or reddish, in winter marked with a black band; crown, red in winter; breast, white, streaked with brown, most so on the sides; back on the lower part, white streaked with brown; the edges of all the feathers dull white or pale reddish.



TWITE.

# TWITE.

## MOUNTAIN LINNET.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Linaria montana,* | SELBY. |
| *Fringilla flavirostris,* | LINNÆUS. |

*Linaria.* *Linum*—Flax. *Montana*—Of, or belonging to mountains.

THIS bird is found in Europe, in Russia, but least extensively in an easterly direction, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, and as far south as Switzerland, France, Germany, and Italy. In Asia also, in Japan, according to M. Temminck.

The Twite is plentiful in the northern parts of England, and in Scotland, Ireland, the Hebrides, and Orkney, throughout the year.

In Yorkshire it breeds in abundance on all the high moors near Halifax, also on Thorne Moor; and near Doncaster, Leeds, and York is likewise met with. The Rev. R. P. Alington has procured specimens from the neighbourhood of the sea, in Lincolnshire.

Indigenous in the north, they are only winter migrants towards the south.

Towards the commencement of winter they unite into flocks, sometimes of large extent, and frequently, in illustration of the adage that 'birds of a feather flock together,' in company with those of kindred species or habits, with whom they visit the farm-yards. They are not of a shy nature, but if disturbed betake themselves to any tall trees that may be near, or to some distant field. When spring arrives, they leave their winter haunts, and disperse over the hilly tracts for their summer sojourn.

Their flight is rapid and undulated, and they wheel about over the field on which they are going to settle, previously to doing so, uttering a soft twitter at intervals.

Their food consists of the seeds of various wild plants and grasses—the turnip, the thistle, chickweed, wild mustard, groundsel, flax, knapweed, and others.

The note is pleasing, and its usual chirp is considered to resemble the name which it has thence derived.

The nest is built on the ground, chiefly in heath, or among gorse, and but seldom, if ever, in bushes. It is formed of small roots, heather, moss, and dry grass, and is lined with a small quantity of hair or wool, and a few feathers.

The eggs, four, five, six, or seven in number, are of a pale greenish or bluish white, spotted with reddish brown or light brown and purple red towards the larger end, with sometimes a few blackish dots.

Male; length, five inches and a quarter; bill, yellow, in summer yellowish white, sometimes greyish yellow; iris, hazel; head on the sides, light reddish brown; forehead, crown, neck on the back, and nape, brown of two shades, the middle part of the feather being darker than the rest. Chin and throat, light reddish yellow brown; breast, light reddish yellow brown, streaked on the sides with dark brown; below dull brownish white; back, brown, middle part of the feathers being darker than the rest, which enlarges in summer, making the back darker; the lower part is crimson or purple red in summer.

The wings, which expand to the width of rather over eight inches and three quarters, have the first and third feathers equal in length, the second the longest in the wing, the fourth a little shorter than the third; greater wing coverts, tipped with pale brown, forming a bar across the wing; lesser coverts, partially tipped with pale brown, forming a second bar; primaries, brownish black, the four first edged with white, with narrow edges of pale brown; tertiaries, brownish black, and broader edges of pale brown. The tail, which is long and much forked, is brownish black with narrow yellowish brown external edges, and white at the base, and broader light brown or greyish white inner margins; upper tail coverts, brown, the middle of the feathers darker than the edges; under tail coverts, dull brownish white, some of them with a dark central mark; legs, toes, and claws, very dark brown.

The female in winter resembles the male, but is paler in colour, and without the red on the lower part of the back. Length, not quite five inches and a quarter. The bill is less clear yellow at the base, and dusky brown at the tip. The wings expand to the width of eight inches and three quarters.

The young are lighter-coloured at first; bill, pale greyish brown. The white on the wings is less extended; legs and toes, light brown; claws, dusky.

# BULLFINCH.

NOPE. POPE. ALP. HOOP. COMMON BULLFINCH.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Loxia pyrrhula,* | PENNANT. MONTAGU. |
| *Pyrrhula vulgaris,* | FLEMING. SELBY. |

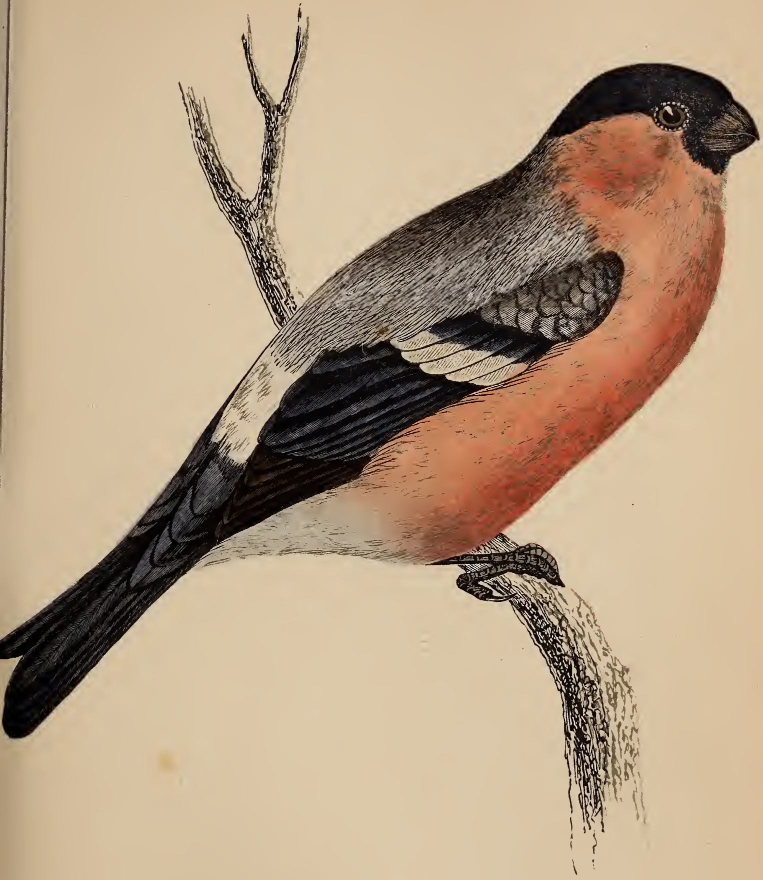
*Loxia. Loxos*—Oblique—transverse, (from the shape of the bill in some species.) *Pyrrhula. Pyrrhulas*—Some bird with red plumage. *Pyrros*—Red.

THIS is a strikingly handsome species—an ornament of the country. In Europe, it inhabits Russia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Germany; in Asia also it occurs, being found in Tartary, and in Japan, according to Thunberg and Temminck.

It is met with throughout England, Ireland, and Scotland; in Orkney one was shot at Lopness, by Mr. Strang, in 1809.

In the spring time it is to be seen more frequently in gardens and orchards, and may be nearly approached in its search there for food. In the winter it meets you in the lane, or by the hedgerow in the field.

A true 'Bird of the green wood,' the Bullfinch avoids the more sterile, or the more highly cultivated districts; for here, as in so many other instances, 'extremes meet,' and the absence of timber, in our country at least, alike betokens the highest and the lowest degree of cultivation. It frequents, therefore, those where trees abound, being to be seen in the depth of the large wood, along the side of the shady grove, in the rich orchard, the budding plantation, the trim garden, the leafy hedge, and the secluded dell through which some little streamlet winds, the gentle trickling of which you listen to with complacent pleasure while you saunter along the bank in the noon of a summer day. Everywhere his rich red colour forms a conspicuous object, so that, like the



BULLFINCH.

den of the 'Dragon of Wantley,' 'you could not choose but spy it.'

These birds are easily kept in confinement, and have been known to pair with the Canary. They are very fond of washing themselves.

The flight of the Bullfinch is quick and undulated, and capable of being protracted on occasion. It does not fly far when disturbed by your approach, but quickly re-enters the hedge, or the side of wood, along which it flitted before you.

Its food consists of the seeds and leaves of groundsel, chickweed, and other weeds, hips and haws, berries and fruits, such as the cherry and plum, the buds, especially the blossom buds, of various trees, such as the plum, the apple, the medlar, the cherry, the gooseberry, and others; and if I may venture upon a conjecture, its name is derived from this circumstance, Bullfinch, if so, being a corruption of Budfinch, the word bud being pronounced in the vulgate of the north of England, as if spelled 'bood.' Small stones are also swallowed to aid digestion.

The common note is a short, plaintive, and sweet pipe, which at once arrests the attention: it is accompanied by a flirtation of the tail: probably its vernacular names Nope, Hoop, and Pope, are derived from its resemblance to those sounds. In spring the song is a low and desultory warble, and the male bird frequently serenades his mate for hours together, while she is sitting on the nest, puffing out his feathers, and moving his head awry. The Bullfinch is taught to whistle tunes, and, I believe, to articulate words.

Towards the end of April, the birds pair, and nidification is commenced in the beginning of May, and is finished by the end of that month, or the beginning of June.

The nest is formed of small twigs, and is lined with small roots, the whole being not firmly compacted: in some instances moss is added. It is generally placed either in a tree, such as a fir, or in the middle of a bush, frequently a hawthorn, at a height of four or five feet from the ground. It is often built in a shrubbery, even near a house, and occasionally, though but seldom, in a garden.

The eggs, four or five in number, are pale blue, speckled and streaked with purple grey, and dark purple. They are hatched towards the end of May, after an incubation of fifteen days. The male takes his turn in sitting with the female. The latter sits very closely though she is in general easily frightened away. The male is less so, but it is said that if he be disturbed, the nest is almost always deserted, which is not the case when the female is alarmed. William Henry Rudston Read, Esq., of Hayton and York, has recorded in the 'Naturalist,' old series, that, when resident at Frickley Hall, near Doncaster, a hen bird which built in a laurel near the house suffered herself to be touched while sitting on her young ones, and would feed from the hand without the least fear. The birds are supposed to pair for life; the members of the family keep together until the spring.

Male; length, from six inches to six and a half—these birds varying considerably in size; bill, very short, thick, and shining black; iris, dark brown; a few bristly feathers surround the base of the bill; head and crown, deep glossy blue black; neck on the back and nape, elegant bluish grey; chin, black; throat and breast, a lovely red; back, delicate bluish grey, on the lower part pure white. The wings ordinarily expand to the width of nine inches and a little over three quarters, but sometimes more than that; the third quill is the longest, the second scarcely shorter, the fourth longer than the first, which is about the same length as the fifth; underneath, the wings are bluish grey; greater wing coverts, black, their ends white, forming a conspicuous bar across the wing; lesser wing coverts, delicate bluish grey; primaries, brownish black; secondaries, brownish black, the outer webs glossed with blue; some of them are occasionally found tinged with red; tertiaries, brownish black, tinged also with blue. The tail, glossy blue black, is of twelve feathers; underneath, it is greyish black; upper tail coverts, glossy blue black; under tail coverts, white. Legs and toes, purple brown; claws, brown.

Female; length, five inches and a little over three quarters; iris, brown; head, not quite so deep a black as in the male; on the sides it is dull light chocolate brown; chin, throat, and breast, dull light chocolate brown, with more or less of a tinge of purple or red; the back has the grey tinged with brown, and the white on its lower part is less extensive. Under tail coverts, less clear white than in the male; legs and toes, dusky brown; claws, black.

The young, when fledged, have the upper parts greyish brown, without any black on the head, and the lower parts yellowish brown: after the first moult, namely, in about two months, their distinctive garb is assumed, but it is not till the second, or even the third year that the fullness of the bright tints is gained. The red is much deeper in some individuals than in others.

A specimen has been known entirely white, and others have been met with pied black and white. Caged birds not unfrequently turn black, of a duller or deeper tint—the result of their having been fed on hemp-seed. One is figured by Professor Nillson, which is pure white on the back, wings, and tail; but the head and all the lower parts of a delicate rose-colour.

# PINE GROSSBEAK.

PINE BULLFINCH. COMMON HAWFINCH.

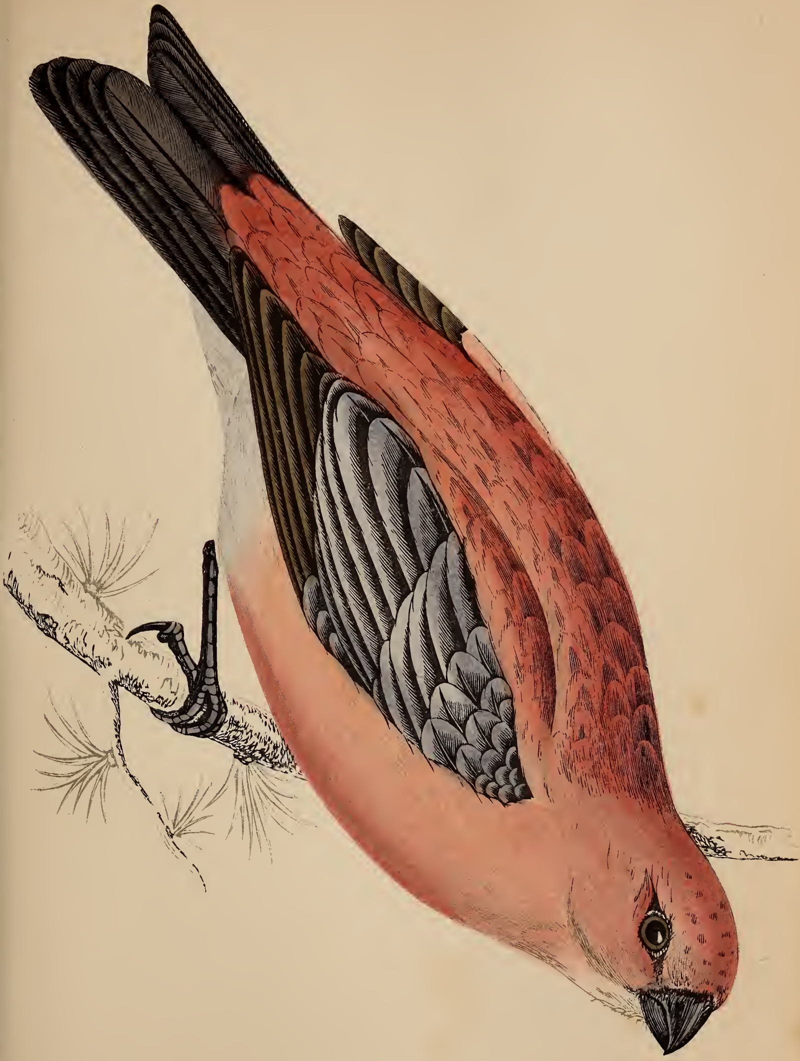
| | |
|---|---|
| *Loxia enucleator,* | PENNANT. MONTAGU. |
| *Corythus enucleator,* | FLEMING. |
| *Pyrrhula enucleator,* | SELBY. JENYNS. |

*Loxia. Loxos*—Curved—oblique. *Enucleator*—One that takes out the kernel of a thing.

So long ago, at the least, as the time of Horace, it would seem to have been considered as a barbarism to compound words of two different languages; 'Canusini more bilinguis;' and whereas the name of Grosbeak, heretofore applied to the bird before us, has been an instance of the fault in question, it will be seen that I have changed it for one which has the merit of being English in both its component parts alike.

The Pine Grossbeak is a native of the northern regions of Europe and America, but is found in the former, not only in Siberia, Russia, Norway, Sweden, and Lapland, but also, though rarely, in France, Germany, and Italy.

In this country a few have occasionally been met with. A flight were seen on the Denes, near Yarmouth, Norfolk, in November, 1822; and in recording the circumstance in the 'Account of the Birds found in Norfolk,' by John Henry Gurney, Esq., and William Richard Fisher, Esq., it is added, that two instances are on record of their having attempted to breed in that district. In one of these cases, the nest containing four eggs, was taken near Bungay; and it is said to have been found on a low branch of a fir, near the stem of the tree, and about three feet from the ground; in the other instance, which occurred at Raveningham, the old birds were shot while in the act of building. It has also



PINE GROSSBEAK.

occurred at Hulston, in Lancashire, and Harrow-on-the-Hill, in Middlesex.

In Scotland they were observed by Pennant in the forests of Invercauld, in Aberdeenshire, the seat of Farquharson, on the 5th. of August.

In Ireland one is reported by the late William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, to have been shot at Cavehill, near that town, in December, 1819.

These birds are of a gentle and unsuspecting nature, and are easily caught, and as easily kept in confinement. They go in small flocks of seven or eight—the family party. They are fond of bathing themselves. They move both on the ground and on the branches of trees by short leaps.

Their flight, says Audubon, is undulating and smooth, performed in a direct line when they are migrating, at a considerable height.

Their food consists of seeds, buds, and berries, and occasionally insects; they also pick up gravel, the prescription of Nature, their all-wise physician.

The note is spoken of as agreeable, and as being sometimes heard at night.

The nest is made of small sticks, and is lined with feathers. It is usually placed on the branch of a tree, only a few feet above the ground.

The eggs are said to be four or five in number, and white. The young are described as being hatched in June.

Male; length, eight inches and a half; bill, dusky, the lower one tinged with red, and the base paler; iris, hazel, surrounded with a narrow band of dusky black, which passes over the base of the upper bill; strong blackish brown bristly feathers directed forwards surround the base of the upper bill. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, bright red; chin, throat, and breast, red, but the feathers are greyish black at their base, lower down the breast is grey; back, brownish grey, the feathers edged with red.

The wings have the third quill feather the longest, the second nearly as long, the first a trifle shorter than the fourth, and both shorter than the second, the fifth a quarter of an inch shorter than the fourth, the second, third, fourth, and fifth have their outer webs slightly cut out; underneath, they are slate-coloured. Greater wing coverts, greyish black tipped with white; lesser wing coverts, greyish black partially tipped with white and edged with red, forming two bands across the wing; primaries, blackish brown, narrowly edged with white, which is tinged with red on the inner half of the first six; secondaries, more broadly edged with white; tertiaries, blackish brown edged with white. Tail, greyish black, and rather forked, the feathers slightly edged with whitish; underneath it is slate-coloured; upper tail coverts, red, but the base of each feather is greyish black; under tail coverts, grey edged with white; legs and toes blackish brown; claws, black.

After the second moult the above red plumage is said to become more or less tinged with yellowish orange.

Female; length, eight inches to eight and a quarter; bill, orange brown; iris, hazel; head, crown, and neck on the back, dull yellow at first, afterwards orange yellow, the feathers streaked with dusky. Chin, throat, and breast, ash-coloured grey tinged with brown; back, brownish slate-coloured above, below dull yellow, afterwards orange yellow. Greater and lesser wing coverts, primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, greyish black tipped with greyish white. Tail, greyish black; upper tail coverts, dull yellow, afterwards orange yellow; under tail coverts, ash-coloured grey. Legs and toes, blackish brown; claws, black.

Young birds of the first year, before their first moult, resemble the female, but are more or less tinged with brown.

# CROSSBILL.

COMMON CROSSBILL. EUROPEAN CROSSBILL. SHEL-APPLE.

*Loxia curvirostra,* LINNÆUS. LATHAM.

*Loxia. Loxos*—Curved—oblique. *Curvirostra. Curvus*—Curved. *Rostra*—The beaks of birds.

It has been abundantly and conclusively demonstrated that the curious beak of the Crossbill, so far from being, as described by Buffon, 'an error and defect in nature, and a useless deformity,' is most peculiarly and admirably adapted to the mode of life for which it was created.

On the European continent these singular birds are met with in Russia, Siberia, Denmark, Norway, Lapland, Sweden, Bavaria, Poland, Germany, Silesia, Bohemia, Prussia, Holland, France, Switzerland, Italy, and Spain. In Asia also, even to remote Japan, and in North America in various parts.

In every or almost every county of England they have at one time or other been met with. In Cornwall, however, they are very rare. One was shot in the Orchard, Grove Hill, Woodlane; and three at Carclew, in April, 1850.

In the latter end of the year 1821 and the beginning of 1822, Crossbills were very numerous in many parts of the country; so they were also in 1828, 1829, 1833, 1834, 1837, 1838, 1839, as likewise in 1806, 1791, and in 1593, of which the following account is given in an old manuscript, quoted by Mr. Yarrell:—'That the yeere 1593 was a greate and exceeding yeere of apples; and there were greate plenty of strang birds, that shewed themselves at the time the apples were full rype, who fedde uppon the kernells onely of those apples, and haveinge a bill with one beake wrythinge over the other, which would presently bore a greate hole in the apple, and make way to the kernells; they were of the bignesse of a Bullfinch, the henne right like the henne of the Bullfinch in coulour; the cocke a very glorious bird, in a manner al redde or yellowe on the brest, back, and head. The oldest man living never heard or reade of any such like bird; and the thinge most to bee noted was, that it seemed they came out of some country not inhabited; for that they at the first would abide shooting at them, either with pellet, bowe, or other engine, and not remove till they were stricken downe; moreover, they would abide the throweing at them, in so much as diverse were stricken downe and killed with often throweing at them with apples. They came when the apples were rype, and went away when the apples were cleane fallen. They were very good meate.'

So also in Childrey's 'Britannia Baconica:'—'In Queen Elizabeth's time a flock of birds came into Cornwall, about harvest, a little bigger than a Sparrow, which had bils thwarted crosswise at the end, and with these they would cut an apple in two at one snap, eating onely the kernels; and they made a great spoil among the apples.'

In Ireland they have been often noticed.

In Scotland they were abundant in 1821, and since then have been repeatedly observed: some remain in that part of the island throughout the year.

In Orkney great numbers of this bird were observed during winter a few years ago. They were also very abundant in several of the islands in 1806 and 1807.

In Yorkshire, in the neighbourhood of Doncaster, in the year 1836, they were very plentiful in the plantations near Sandal, and no doubt all around. I wrote an acconnt of them in the 'Magazine of Natural History.' volume ix., p. 413; also near Knaresborough in 1846, as likewise in numbers about the year 1838, so also in 1829. They have been met with near Hebden-Bridge, Halifax, Barnsley, Sheffield, Killingbeck, Leeds, and Boynton, near Bridlington.

In Bramham Park several nests were found in the year 1840, and at Boynton, Arthur Strickland, Esq., found one himself; also near Swinhope, in Lincolnshire, the Rev. R. P. Alington has known them in former years tolerably common, feeding on the cones of the larch firs.

This species also builds in the fir plantations about Dodington, Kent, of which Mr. Chaffey of that place is my informant; and it has also been known to do so near Dartford, in the same county, and near Saffron Walden, Essex, in a garden in the town, and in Orwell Park, near Ipswich, in the year 1822. Instances of its doing so are also recorded in the Messieurs Sheppard and Whitear's 'Catalogue of the Norfolk and Suffolk Birds;' likewise in Durham by Mr Joseph Duff; and in Devonshire a pair built at Ogwell House, near Newton, the seat of Thomas William Taylor, Esq., in April, 1839, as recorded by W. R. Hall Jordan, Esq., of Teignmouth; and another pair in Holt Forest, Hampshire; also at Broome, the seat of Sir H. Oxenden, Bart., in Kent.

They have been observed with us in some parts of the kingdom in every month of the year, but mostly in those of the winter and spring. They appear in all places to be of a roving wandering disposition, uncertain in their movements, appearing suddenly here and there in large numbers, and as suddenly disappearing again; but doubtless they are guided by some instinct, the cause or the object of which is unknown to us.

These birds are by no means shy, and are very easily tamed: in one instance, namely in the aviary of Lord Braybrooke, at Audley End, near Saffron Walden, Essex, they have been known to build and lay. In confinement they shew their connexion with the Parrots by climbing about their cage in all directions, both with beak and claws; even when dead they still cling on, with the tenacity of life, to the bough which has afforded them a resting-place—'the ruling passion strong in death.' They are reckoned very good eating on the continent, and are sold for the purpose in considerable numbers.

Their flight is undulated, and at the same time quick and rapid.

Their food consists of the seeds of the various species of fir trees, as also at times those of the apple, the mountain ash, the alder, the hawthorn, and others, if need be even those of the thistle: sand and small fragments of stone are also swallowed. In extracting the seeds from the smaller cones of the larch, and others of the pines, they frequently, having first cut one off from the tree with their bill, hold it firmly against a branch between the claws of one or both feet, after having flitted with it to some neighbouring bough, or removed to the nearest convenient part of the one they are on. The sound of the cracking of the cones arrests attention. On the larger ones they perch, and make them at once their dining-table and their dinner—'mensas consumimus:' sometimes the cone falls to the ground—an unfortunate turning of the tables for the poor bird. They occasionally descend to drink.

In spring, the note, though low, is pleasing and agreeable; at other times while feeding, they keep up a constant chatter—a 'chip, chip,' and 'soc, soc,' accompanied by a movement of the body, and in flying from one place to another, emit a sharp tone. On warm sunny days, they sometimes indulge in a sudden flight, and after disporting themselves about for a short time in full chorus, alight on the tops of the trees, continuing for a time a gentle warbling; both the male and female sing.

Nidification commences very early in foreign countries, even in January or February, the young having been found fledged in March.

The nest is placed in the angle of the junction of the branches to the tree, low down and also high up; and is loosely compacted of small twigs, grass, small straws, and moss, lined on the inside with the dry leaves of the fir tree, and also with feathers.

The eggs are white, sometimes tinged with blue or green, and spotted, chiefly at the thicker end, with reddish, bluish red, purple, or brown.

These birds vary very greatly in size, as they also do in colour, exhibiting a diversity of shades according to age or season, of yellow, orange, red, scarlet, green, and olive. Male; length, from six inches and a quarter to seven and a half; the bill, which varies considerably in length, curvature, and the degree of elongation of the lower mandible, is above principally dark greyish brown, as is the tip of the lower bill, the remainder being dull yellowish; the upper part sometimes inclines to the right, and sometimes to the left, and the bill has a lateral expansion as well as the ordinary one. Iris, hazel; head and crown, pale dull red; neck behind and nape, pale red mixed with grey; breast above, pale dull red with a mixture of yellow, below greyish white, darker on the sides. Back, on the middle part dusky red, the lower part bright reddish yellow.

The wings expand to the width of a little over eleven inches and a third to eleven and three quarters; the second quill is the longest, the first a trifle shorter, as is the third than it; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, deep brown, the smaller feathers tinged with dull red; greater and lesser under wing coverts, brownish grey. The tail is rather short, extending one inch beyond the closed wings; upper tail coverts, dark brown; under tail coverts, greyish brown, broadly margined with dull white. Legs and toes, purple brown; claws, brownish black.

The moult takes place in the autumn, and in the height of summer all the tints are paler, and the plumage worn on the back only shews darker from this cause.

Female; length, seven inches and a sixth to seven and a quarter; head, crown, neck on the back, nape, and back, dull greyish brown, the centre of the feathers only slightly darker; on the lower part the back is dull yellowish grey. The wings expand to the width of eleven inches and three quarters, or thereabouts.

The young are at first dark green, with blackish longitudinal markings, and the bill is not crossed. The young males after the first moult are variously dull red, yellowish red, greenish yellow, or dull yellow, shaded with reddish. The back on its lower part is yellowish; wings, blackish brown; tail, blackish brown.

# PARROT CROSSBILL.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Loxia pityopsittacus,* | BEWICK. FLEMING. |
| " *curvirostra major, (as a variety,)* | GMELIN. LATHAM. |

*Loxia.* *Loxos*—Curved—oblique. *Pityopsittacus.* *Pittüs*—A pine tree. *Psittacus*—A Parrot.

THIS species, as by many eminent naturalists it is considered, is an inhabitant of the high northern latitudes of Europe. It is found in Germany also, and is occasionally met with in Holland, Switzerland, and France, as well as in Sweden and Norway.

In this country they are but rare visitants, and only appear now and then, 'longo post intervallo.' A pair were received by Pennant from Shropshire; one was shot in Surrey; and another was obtained in Epping Forest, Essex, in the autumn of 1835. One was shot at Saxham, in Suffolk, in November, 1850; and one some years previously at Riddlesworth Hall, Norfolk, as recorded by Alfred Newton, Esq., of Elveden Hall, Thetford, in the 'Zoologist,' page 3145. Several were sold in the London market in March, 1838; and one shot at Harrow-on-the-Hill, Middlesex, on the 21st. of January, 1850. Mr. Chaffey, of Dodington, Kent, informs me that he saw a small flock of these birds in a larch plantation there in September, 1851.

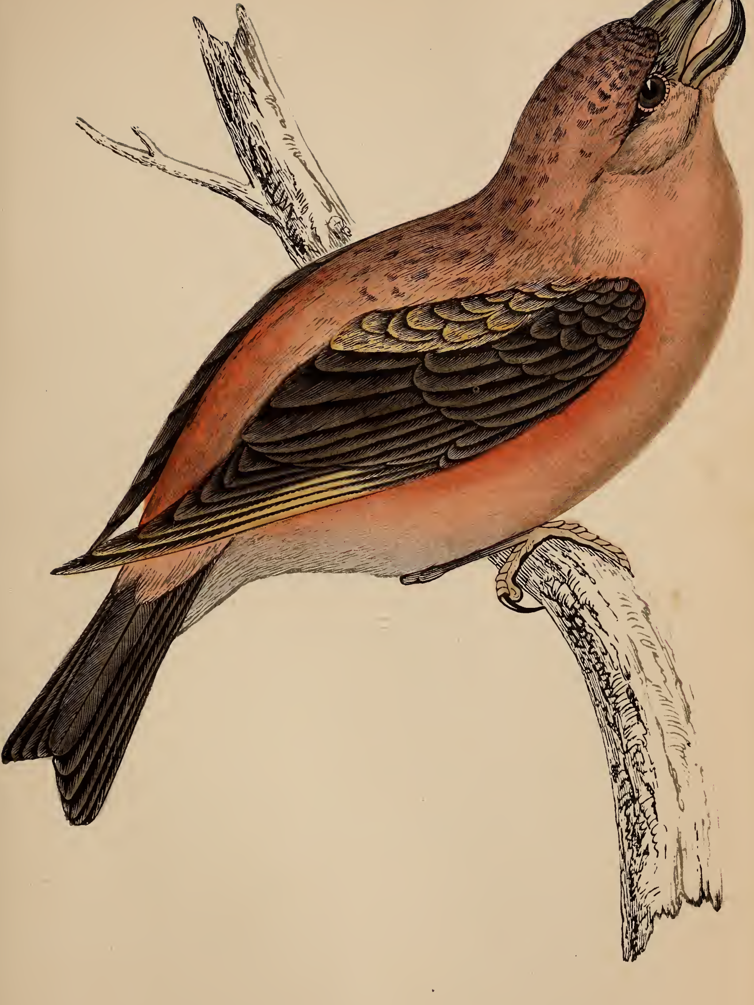
In Scotland two have occurred

In Ireland, one was shot by Rainey Maxwell, Esq., at Grenville, near Belfast, in May, 1802.

These birds are denizens of the large pine forests, and are said to prefer the tops of trees, seldom descending except to drink, and roosting together at night in large companies. They are capable of being kept in confinement.

Their food consists of the seeds of fir cones and others.

They breed in April or May, or even earlier, the eggs



PARROT CROSSBILL.

having been found in February and March; and the nests having been observed to have been begun by the middle of December.

The nest is placed chiefly in lofty forest trees, and is composed of small twigs, lined with dry grass or leaves of the fir tree.

The eggs are said to be four or five in number, ash-coloured, or bluish white, and spotted with bluish red and dusky at the larger end.

The young are hatched after a fortnight's incubation.

Male; length, seven inches and a quarter to seven and a half or rather more; bill, large, dusky grey, yellowish at the base of the lower mandible; iris, bright hazel; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, red; chin, throat, and breast, red; back, darker red, lighter on the lower part; all the red feathers are more or less streaked with dusky in younger birds. The wings extend to the width of one foot; primaries secondaries, and tertiaries, dusky black, darker with age; the first quill feather is the longest, the second nearly as long, the third a little shorter still, and the fourth a quarter of an inch shorter than the third. The tail forked, dusky black, darker with age; it extends one inch beyond the end of the wings; upper tail coverts, light red; legs, short and strong, and reddish brown, as are the toes; claws, dark brown. The moult takes place in September, October, and November.

Female; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, greenish ash-colour, with patches of brown; chin and throat, grey, clouded with yellowish brown; breast, ash-colour, varied with yellowish green; back, dull greenish yellow, lighter and more yellow on its lower part; under tail coverts, greyish white, the base of each feather greyish brown.

The young bird of the year has the bill blackish horn-colour; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, greyish white, much streaked with greyish brown; back, greyish white, much streaked with greyish brown, on the lower part slightly tinged with yellow; greater and lesser wing coverts, dark brown tipped with pale brown; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, blackish brown, also tipped with pale brown; legs and toes, lead-colour; claws, black.

# AMERICAN WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.

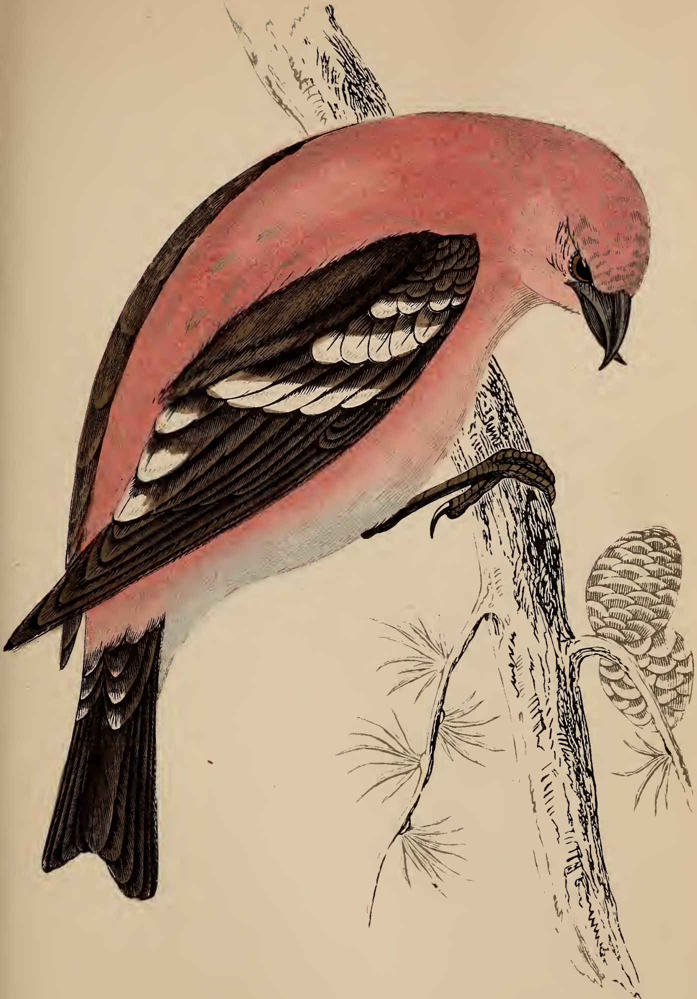
*Loxia leucoptera*, GMELIN. BUONAPARTE
*falcirostra*, PENNANT. FLEMING?

*Loxia. Loxos*—Curved—oblique. *Leucoptera. Leucos*—White
*Pteron*—A wing.

THIS and the following species were first distinguished by M. De Selys Longchamps.

The one before us is native of the whole of the northern parts of North America, where it inhabits the extensive pine forests. It is found also in northern Europe, a few being occasionally seen in Sweden, and also in Germany; and occurred in Silesia and Thuringia in considerable numbers in the autumn of 1826.

A White-winged Crossbill, a female bird, was shot near Northampton in the winter of the year 1848. It was kept alive for four months. Of this Mr. William Felkin, Jun., of Carrington, near Nottingham, has obligingly informed me. One in Mr. Yarrell's collection was picked up dead on the sea-shore at Exmouth, on the 17th. of September, 1845, by E. B. Fitton, Esq.; and another, in that of Hugh Edwin Strickland, Esq., was shot near Worcester, in 1836, being in company at the time with the Common Crossbill; another was shot by Mr. Seaman, near Ipswich, Suffolk. One, a female, in the garden of Robert J. Bell, Esq., of Mickleover House, Derby; it was in company with a flock of Fieldfares; one out of a flock of four or five, on some fir trees near Thetford, Norfolk, on the 10th. of May, 1846; several near Walton House, Carlisle, Cumberland, in the same year; and nine others, five males and four females, by Mr. Thomas Bond, of Swinstead House, near Brampton, also in that county. One was shot out of a small flock which were feeding on fir cones, at Drinkstone, in Suffolk; and one at Larigan, near Penzance, Cornwall.



AMERICAN WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILL.

In Scotland one, mentioned by Pennant, and one recorded by Archibald Jerdon, Esq., which was shot near Bonjedward, Roxburghshire, in February, 1841.

These birds go in flocks of from twenty to fifty, taking wing all at once together when alarmed, and after a little manœuvring in the air, generally alighting again on the trees from which they had moved. The young leave the nest in June, and are soon able to join the parent birds in their autumnal migration from the 'North countree' to some rather more hospitable clime.

The nest is said to be placed on the branches of pine trees, and to be composed of grasses, cemented together with earth and lined with feathers.

The eggs are described as white, marked with yellowish spots.

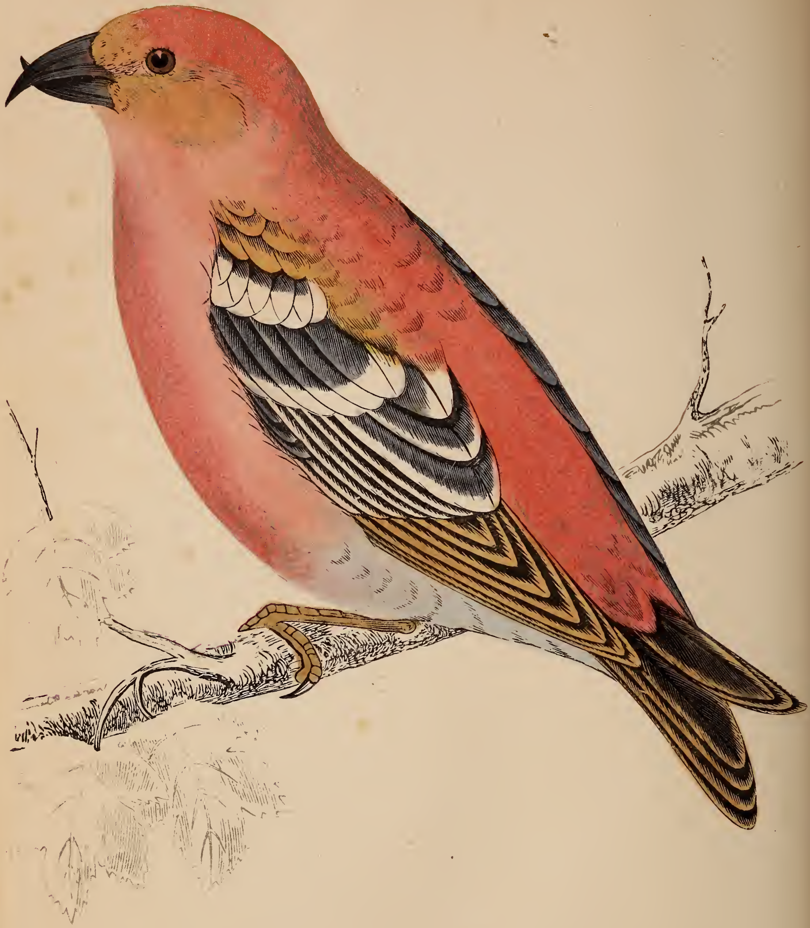
Male; length, about six inches. The bill is much compressed laterally, and black in colour; a black line passes through the eye. The head, which is sometimes speckled on the sides with black, and is crossed on the forehead with a line of that colour, is fine crimson, as are also the crown and neck, the base of each feather being dark grey. The nape is crossed by a blackish band; chin, throat, and breast above, fine crimson, the latter on the middle part and below is greyish brown. The back, also crimson, is crossed about the middle by a blackish band.

The wings have the first three quill feathers nearly equal in length, the fourth shorter than the third, but much longer than the fifth; greater and lesser wing coverts, broadly tipped with white, forming two bands; primaries, black, some of them narrowly edged with white; secondaries and tertiaries, black, some of the latter tipped with white. Tail, almost uniform black; upper tail coverts dusky, bordered at the tip of each feather with a narrow line of white. Legs and toes, brown.

The female, at first like the young male, has the head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, greenish grey, the feathers bordered with yellowish green. Chin, throat, and breast above, greenish grey, streaked with blackish lines, and on the middle whitish, with some yellow; back, greenish grey, on the lower part pale yellow. The wings are barred with white as in the male.

In the young the bill is dark horn-colour towards the point, the upper mandible very much compressed, the lower one is rather lighter in colour; iris, dark hazel; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, dull greenish grey, mottled with a darker tint on the centre of each feather. Chin, throat, and breast, lighter grey, the feathers streaked with dusky brown. Back, on the lower part tinged with greenish yellow. Greater and lesser wing coverts, dull black, tipped with white, forming two conspicuous bars across the wings; primaries and secondaries dusky black, with narrow lighter-coloured edges; tertiaries, dusky black, edged and tipped with white. The tail forked, the feathers dull black, with narrow light-coloured edges; under tail coverts, dark at the base of the feathers with greyish white ends. Legs, toes, and claws, dark brown.

The Prince of Musignano has described one in which the crimson colour was changed for light buff orange.



TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL.

# TWO-BARRED CROSSBILL.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Loxia tænioptera,* | GLOGER. |
| " *bifasciata,* | NILLSON. |
| *Crucirostra bifasciata,* | BREHM. |
| *Loxia leucoptera,* | JENYNS. GOULD. YARRELL. |

*Loxia.* *Loxos*—Oblique—curved. *Tænioptera.* *Tainia*—A band. *Pteron*—A wing.

To Mrs. H. E. Strickland, I am indebted for the coloured drawing from which the plate is taken; a 'Happy Illustration' of what might be expected from the daughter of so eminent a naturalist as Sir William Jardine, and the wife of such another as my friend Hugh Edwin Strickland, Esq.

The original plate is in Buonaparte's monograph of the Crossbills.

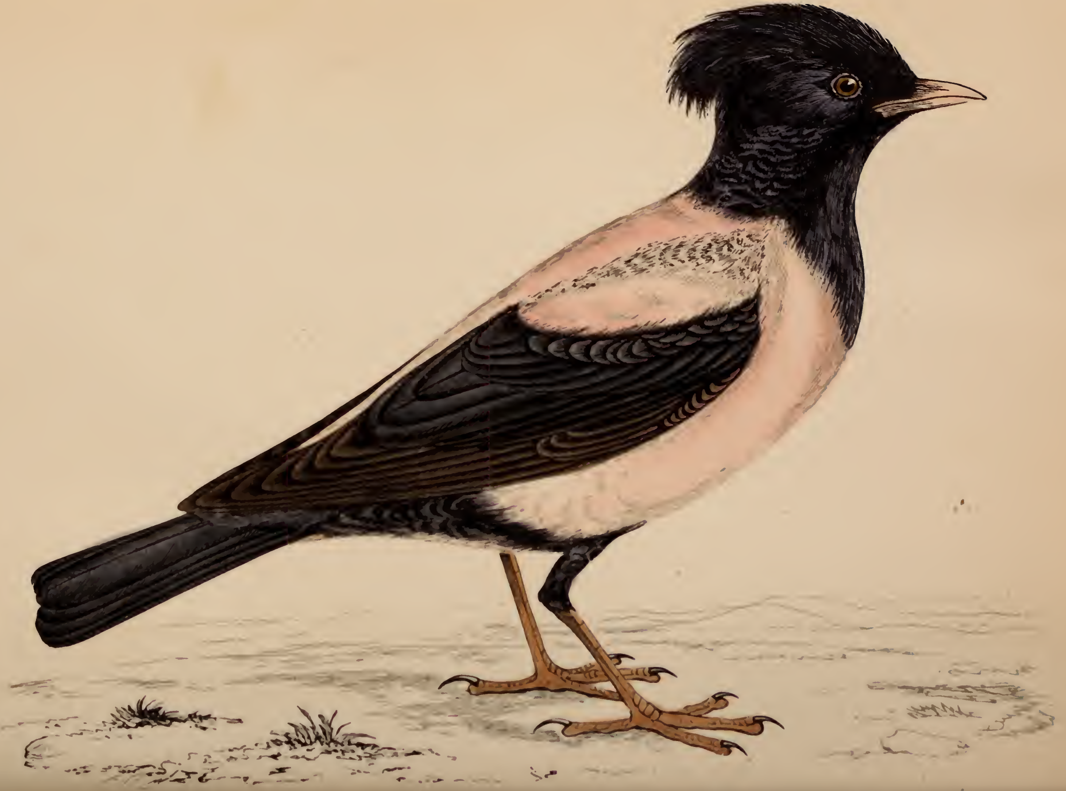
I describe this species as a British bird, as well as the one preceding it, because so many specimens of White-winged Crossbills have of late years occurred in the country, that it seems hardly possible to doubt but that some of them must belong to the one before us, an European species; two individuals of the number only, as far as I am aware, having been positively identified with the other, which is an American one; Buonaparte and Schlegel also indeed, though I know not on what authority, give Britain as one of the countries to which it occasionally migrates.

One was shot at Grenville, near Belfast, in Ireland, January 11th., 1802.

Many examples of this species have occurred on the continent of Europe; its proper habitat being the cold districts of Siberia and Northern Asia, from whence it wanders occasionally into the more temperate regions of Russia, Sweden, Germany, Holland, and Belgium. In this our continent, therefore, it is necessarily only considered as an occasional straggler; and from whence it has come, whether from the American continent, across the wide and stormy Atlantic by some instinctively-discovered 'North-west Passage,' or from the equally wild regions of the Caucasian range by some overland transit, is a question which we cannot answer, and must accordingly be content to leave in the uncertain state in which it propounds itself to our inquiry. Certainly, however, it would appear the most natural, that that journey, the land one, which offers a halting-place, when required, to the weary traveller, should be the one adopted by the fragile bird. Uncertain too, as are the periods, so are also doubtless the causes of its migrations, if migrations they may be called, wanderings rather, instigated by some motive, which, if we knew, might commend itself at once to our reason as the natural one, or by some mysterious and hidden impulse, whose capricious and wayward tendency we could by no means fathom the secret of, even if we had ascertained that it was by it that its movements were directed.

Male; length, from six inches and a quarter to a little over seven; the bill is wider at the base than that of the American White-winged Crossbill; iris, hazel; head and crown, pale dull red; neck behind and nape, pale red mixed with grey; chin, throat, and breast above, pale dull red with a mixture of yellow; below greyish white, darker on the sides; the back is dusky red on the middle part, and bright reddish yellow on the lower; the sides do not assume the black tint which distinguishes the American White-winged Crossbill.

The wings are shorter than in the Common Crossbill; the greater and lesser wing coverts have two broad white bands across them, occupying the tips of those feathers; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, deep brown, the smaller feathers tinged with dull red; the tertiaries are also tipped with white; greater and lesser under wing coverts, brownish grey. The tail is longer than in the Common Crossbill; legs and toes, purple brown; the toes are also shorter than in the Common Crossbill.



# ROSE-COLOURED PASTOR.

ROSE OUZEL. ROSE-COLOURED OUZEL. ROSE-COLOURED STARLING.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Pastor roseus,* | FLEMING. SELBY. |
| *Turdus roseus,* | PENNANT. MONTAGU |

*Pastor*—A shepherd. *Roseus*—Rose-coloured.

THIS is a 'first cousin, once removed,' of the Starling, with whom accordingly it keeps up, as will be seen, the intercommunication of relationship, but its position in the society of birds is somewhat anomalous.

In Europe, it occurs occasionally in Russia, Siberia, Dalmatia, Lapland, Sweden, and Suabia, and regularly visits Spain, Italy, Hungary, and the south of France. It is a native of Asia, and in India seems to be very abundant in the Dukkun, forty or fifty being sometimes killed at a shot out of the vast flocks which almost darken the air. In Africa it is also met with, in Egypt.

In Yorkshire, two were shot near Bawtry; one at Skiningrove near Whitby; one at Thorne, out of a flock of three or four; one at Ripley; one at Farnley Hall, near Otley; one near Beverley; one at North Burton; one at Boynton Hall, near Bridlington, in 1829; and one in Cootham Marsh, near Redcar, on the 28th. of August, 1851.

The following have also been obtained at various times:—One at Norwood, Surrey, near London; and one at Ivor Court, Buckinghamshire. In Caermarthenshire, one was shot while eating cherries in a nursery garden at Swansea, in July, 1836. In Cambridgeshire, one at Haydon House, near Royston. In Suffolk, one at Woodbridge, in July, 1832, one at Lound, near Lowestoft, in June, 1851, and another on the 7th. of September, 1850; one in August, 1815, one by Captain Manby, near the Hospital, in April, 1820, and one in April, 1833. In Norfolk, one at Brooke Hall, and one at Thetford, in September, 1843, and some others. In Northumberland, a small flock was seen near Bamborough Castle, in July, 1818, in company with Starlings; one about the same time near Newcastle; and two others were shot near Alnwick. In Lincolnshire also, and in Durham. In Glamorganshire, one in a garden near Swansea, in 1836. In Lancashire, two in the neighbourhood of Ormskirk. In Anglesea, one at Holyhead. In Hampshire, a pair were seen near Christchurch, and the male was procured. In Derbyshire, one about the year 1809, near Weston, and another was observed near Melbourne, in October, 1842, in company with Starlings, but, being close to some sheep, it could not be fired at. In Sussex this bird has also been procured.

One was shot near Lostwithiel, in Cornwall, by Philip Pomeroy, Esq., about the year 1822, and another by Boughton Kingdon, Esq., my informant, about the year 1835, in the autumn: it was in an elder tree, and was attacked by Swallows and other small birds. Also one at Helston; and one in the Scilly Islands; and another was shot at St. Budeaux, in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, on the 17th. of June, 1851. For a beautifully-executed drawing of this specimen, as of several other rare species, I am exceedingly indebted to a very obliging correspondent, John Gatcombe, Esq., of Wyndham Place, Plymouth. An adult male was shot at Eastwood, near Nottingham, in October, 1851, as William Felkin, Esq., Jun., of Carrington, near that place, has written me word; and one at Topsham, in Devonshire, of which N. Rowe, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, has informed me. One at Chudleigh, on the 18th. of June, 1851; one at Berry Head, on the 12th. of the same month; and one about the same time of the year in 1845. One was shot in Oxfordshire, another near Oxford, in the spring of 1837, and another in February, 1838.

In Scotland, one at Dunkeld, and another shot in a garden in Forfarshire, on the 29th. of September, 1831.

In Ireland several have been taken.

In the Orkney Islands one was procured, of which my friend Hugh Edwin Strickland, Esq. has informed me; and another, a female was taken at Hoy; one also in the garden of the Rev. Mr. Hamilton; one caught at Skaill, and kept for some time in confinement; another shot by Mr. Urquhart, at Elsness; and others also have been observed at Hoy. One has occurred in Shetland.

These birds are capable of being tamed. In their wild state they are said to consort with the Starlings.

Their food consists principally of insects, and in search of some of these they frequently perch on the backs of sheep, in the same way that the Starlings do, and hence, it would appear, their generic name. They are considered in the countries where they are numerous to be beneficial on this account, and are therefore protected by the inhabitants, more wise than some of ours in similar cases. They are also partial to fruit, and are often accordingly found in gardens; they likewise eat seeds.

Their common note is a harsh one, but they have considerable vocal powers.

The nest is located in holes of trees, and in cavities in old walls.

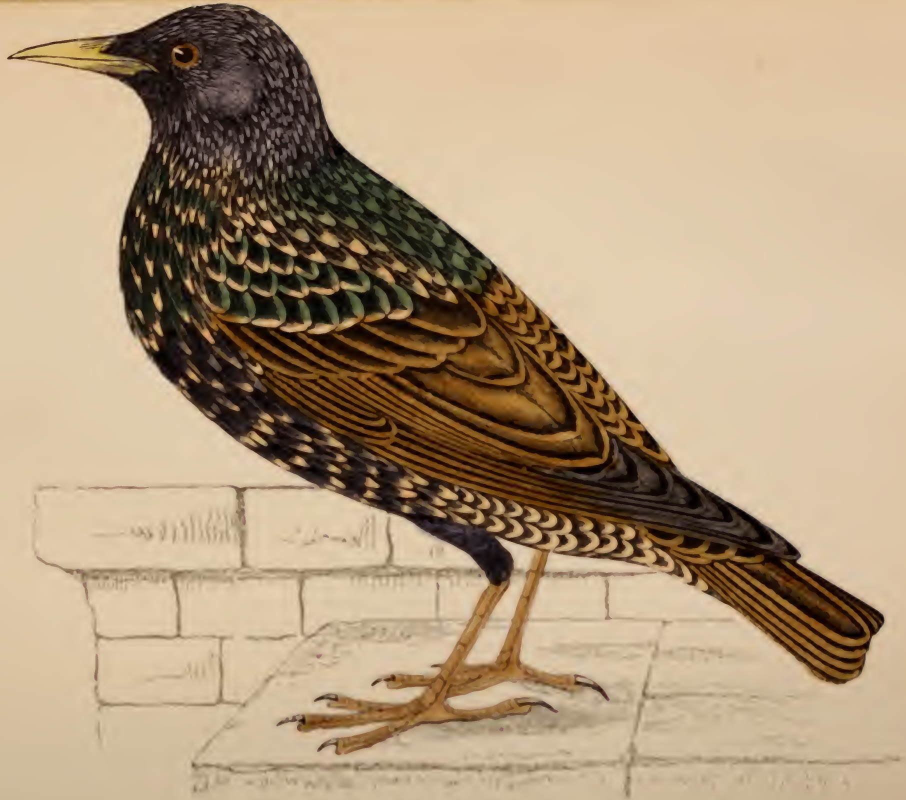
The eggs are five or six in number, and are said by the Hon. Thomas Littleton Powys, on the authority of Mr. Linder, of Geneva, to be white, resembling those of the Starling.

Male; length, eight inches and a half to nearly nine inches; bill, yellowish rose-colour, except at the tip, which, with part of the upper one, is almost black; iris, deep reddish brown; a crest, which comes to its full length in the third year, is formed of the elongated feathers of the head, which, as well as the crown, neck on the back, and nape, is black glossed with purple blue; chin and throat, black; breast and back, delicate rose-colour.

The wings have the first feather very short, only three quarters of an inch long, the second the longest, the third a little shorter than the second, the fourth a quarter of an inch shorter than the third, and the others graduated; greater wing coverts, glossy black, with green reflections; lesser wing coverts, black, margined with grey; primaries, brownish black, tinged with green; some of the secondaries are glossy black with green reflections, and some of them only so on the outer webs. The tail is rather short, and slightly rounded, its colour glossy greenish black; under tail coverts, black. Legs and toes, yellowish brown; claws, darker brown.

The female resembles the male, but her colours are much duller. The breast and the back have the rose-colour obscured with brown.

Young; bill, yellow at the base, gradually encroaching on the brown at the tip; there is no crest; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, dull brown, which gradually becomes blacker; chin and throat, white; breast, greyish brown; back, dull brown, gradually darkening. Primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dark brown, edged with white or greyish ash-colour; tail, dark brown, the feathers edged with greyish ash-colour; under tail coverts, white. Legs, toes, and claws, brown.



STARLING.

# STARLING.

STARE. COMMON STARLING. COMMON STARE.
SOLITARY THRUSH, (THE YOUNG.)

*Sturnus vulgaris,* PENNANT. MONTAGU.

*Sturnus*—A Starling. *Vulgaris*—Common.

THIS well-known bird is an inhabitant of the north of Europe, being found in Russia, Siberia, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, as well as in Turkey, Italy, and all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean; in Madeira also, the Canary Islands, and the Azores. In Asia too it dwells, in Asia Minor; and in India, in Nepaul and the Himalaya Mountains; in China also, and Japan. In Africa likewise it is found, even so far south as the Cape of Good Hope.

In our own country it is everywhere to be met with, from the Orkney and Shetland Islands to Cornwall, but in the latter chiefly as a winter visitor, few remaining to breed.

Starlings are common even in London; many couples constantly breed in Gray's Inn Gardens, where they may be seen daily. They are quite numerous in Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park; so my friend W. F. W. Bird, Esq. informs me.

In some parts of Scotland they are abundant, in others less common.

In Ireland also they are extremely abundant, but are seen in the greatest numbers in the winter, numerous flocks, great and small, migrating from Scotland to the north of the island, from whence they spread themselves to the south. They generally proceed onward without halting, but occasionally they do. In one or two instances they have been observed, once on the 23rd. of March, by the late William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, returning by the same route. They generally arrive between eight and ten o'clock in the morning, few coming after that hour, except when the wind is high, and then the flight is protracted until noon; if very stormy they do not come at all. They probably commence their flight very early in the morning. If circumstances have delayed their migration they make up for lost time by an increase in numbers.

In Orkney they exist in immense numbers, and may be seen in flocks of thousands.

They are partially migratory, or rather moveable, in some places at some seasons.

So early as the latter end of the month of June, as soon, in fact, as their young have been sufficiently educated, Starlings begin to collect together in flocks of twenty or thirty, and, as the season advances, each of these is severally added to by recruits from other families, who join them in their flights, and so the original party 'crescit eundo' until in the end a vast mass is congregated. In the evening they collect in troops of thousands in the reed-beds which adjoin the river or the lake, especially in the fen districts of Lincolnshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdonshire, and their harsh cry may be heard at a great distance, sounding almost like the noise of a steam saw-mill; so they also do in numbers towards the end of the summer even in gardens and on houses, and only after a great chattering retire to rest. Their habits, therefore, are social at these portions of the year, and even in the breeding-season many pairs will frequent the same locality, if it presents a sufficiency of favourable situations. They are very assiduous in their care of their young. They frequently may be seen in company with different other species, such as Redwings, Fieldfares, Wood Pigeons, Jackdaws, Plovers, and especially Rooks, a common purpose bringing them together on neutral ground. They are occasionally a little quarrelsome over some mutual 'bone of contention,' but in general they live peaceably together, nor do they molest other birds. In barren districts they roost at night all the year round in the holes and crevices where they have built, but in other parts of the country, where a choice of shelter is afforded, they repair to different situations for the purpose. They are good enough to eat, but rather tough, and slightly bitter.

Starlings are intelligent, quick, and sprightly birds, and have a retentive memory.

Their flight is straight, strong, vigorous, and rapid, performed with regularly-timed beatings of the wings: on the ground they walk with alternate steps. They alight in an abrupt manner on the open pasture, and immediately disperse, running nimbly along in earnest search of food, which if discovered underground is uprooted from thence. 'During their search they are seldom altogether silent, some individuals commonly keeping up a chattering noise, and occasionally uttering a low scream, when interfered with by others. This scream prolonged and heightened is the intimation of alarm, and when heard from one or more of the flock, they immediately cease their search, look up, and if they should judge it necessary, fly off with speed to another generally distant part.'

They sometimes join flights of other birds in the air, such as Lapwings, and seem to keep in the van, and lead and guide the others backwards and forwards. It is a beautiful sight to watch a cloud of these birds, dividing in a moment into various detachments, and again as suddenly re-uniting with as much harmony as the ranks of the best disciplined army. They assume in these flights all manner of shapes, even that of a balloon, and if threatened by a Hawk present a dense and compact mass, resistant on every side.

The late Dr. Stanley, Bishop of Norwich, well describes the flight of a large flock as follows:—'At first they might be seen advancing high in the air like a dark cloud, which, in an instant, as if by magic, became almost invisible, the whole body, by some mysterious watchword or signal, changing their course, and presenting their wings to view edgeways, instead of exposing, as before, their full expanded spread. Again, in another moment, the cloud might be seen descending in a graceful sweep, so as almost to brush the earth as they glanced along. Then once more they were seen spiring in wide circles on high, till at length, with one simultaneous rush, down they glide, with a roaring noise of wing, till the vast mass buried itself unseen, but not unheard, amidst a bed of reeds, projecting from the bank adjacent to the wood; for no sooner were they perched, than every throat seemed to open itself, forming one incessant confusion of tongues. If nothing disturbed them, there they would most likely remain, but if a stone was thrown, a shout raised, or, more especially, if a gun was fired, up again would rise the mass, with one unbroken rushing sound, as if the whole body were possessed but of one wing to bear them on their upward flight.'

When sweeping down to settle to rest for the night, some would appear to alight at each descent, while the bulk of the flock fly round and round, until the whole conclude their manœuvres, and join the first settlers in their roosting-place. Where the reeds are made use of, much damage is caused by the breaking them down.

Their food consists of insects, caterpillars, grasshoppers, worms, snails, grain, fruits, and seeds, and in search of each severally of these they may be seen now sweeping off from their secure retreats in the grey old church-tower, or the 'cool grot' of the lonely cliff that overhangs the pebbled beach of the glorious ocean, and hurrying to the ploughed field or the farm-yard, the quiet cow-fold and the pasturing herd; now perching on an adjoining wall, and now on the back of a familiar sheep, and now whistling their quaint ditty from the house-top or the neighbouring tree. In winter, in very hard weather, they frequent the sea-shore, turning over, with a sudden opening and twirling of the bill, the stones which hide the marine insects. They also swallow a little gravel to aid the digestion of their food.

On sunny days, even in winter, they may be heard gurgling a low and not unpleasing note, which, when the result of the 'concerted music' of a flock, forms a body of sound to which you like to listen. Meyer compares their common call-note to the words starling, star, or stoar. Both male and female sing, but the latter the least. Starlings are easily kept in confinement, and may be taught to articulate various words; but those who can take a 'Sentimental Journey' with the talented Sterne, will lament for the poor bird in the cage, and will wish that they had not heard its melancholy 'I can't get out! I can't get out!'

Nidification commences about the beginning or middle of April. Starlings build in church-steeples and in holes of the walls of houses, towers, or ruins, as also in those of trees, as well as in cliffs and rocky and precipitous places; at times in dove-cotes and pigeon-houses, as also in caverns and under rocks, and even have been known to occupy the holes deserted by rats, and more or less fashioned for themselves. In Woburn Park, Bedfordshire, I am informed by Mr. George B. Clarke, that Starlings have built some dome-shaped nests in Scotch firs, the entrance placed near the branch of the tree, the nests being made of coarse grass, and lined with fine grass. He also mentions in 'The Naturalist,' volume i, page 214, some built in trees that were quite flat; and again, page 116, that he has known them feloniously and burglariously occupy the holes previously excavated by Sand Martins for themselves, contrary to 'Martin's Act;' and J. Mc'Intosh, Esq. also, at page 204, describing a famous chesnut tree in the grounds of Canford House, Dorsetshire, one of five planted by John of Gaunt, mentions that at its base was a colony of rabbits, in the trunk a nest of cats, and immediately above the latter, one of Starlings.

The nest is large, and fabricated of straws, roots, portions of plants, and dry grass, with a rude lining of feathers and hairs. The birds will sometimes resort most pertinaciously to the same building-place, in spite of every opposition, discouragement, and blockade. In one instance the eggs have been said to have been found in the nest of a Magpie.

The eggs, four or five to six in number, are of a delicate pale blue colour: some have a few black dots.

Incubation lasts about sixteen days: both birds feed the young.

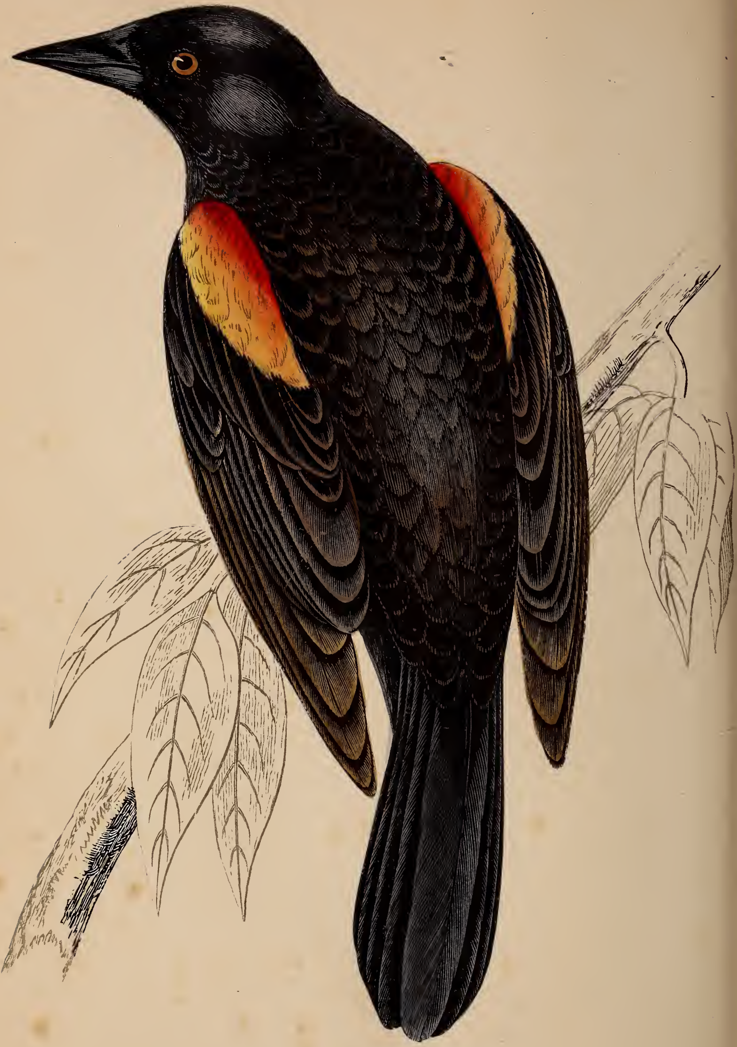
Male; length, nine inches and a quarter to nine and a half; bill, pale yellow, except close to the base; iris, dark chesnut brown, sometimes yellowish; the head, which is much flattened on the crown, trending straight back from the bill, as also the neck, nape, chin, throat, breast, and back, black, splendidly glossed in different lights with purple, bronze, copper-colour, gold, and green, the latter predominating on the neck and head, and each feather minutely tipped with pale brownish white, white, or cream-coloured round or triangular-shaped spots, which wear out in the spring; in very old birds the head and neck in front are without any of the white spots.

The wings, which expand to the width of one foot three inches and a half to three quarters, and reach to within three quarters of an inch of the tip of the tail, have the first feather very short, the third the longest, the second the next, the fourth the next, the remainder slowly graduated, shortening by about a quarter of an inch each; greater and lesser wing coverts, dusky, edged with pale reddish brown; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dusky, their outer webs more or less glossed with green, and margined with light brownish red. The tail is short, and of twelve feathers, dusky in colour, their outer webs more or less glossed with green, and margined with light brownish red; upper tail coverts, black, glossed with green, and edged with pale rust-colour; under tail coverts, black, bordered with white. Legs and toes, brownish red; claws, dusky.

The female is rather less brilliant in colour; length, nine inches and a quarter; bill, blackish brown; iris, dark brown; the spots on the breast are larger than in the male. The wings expand to the width of a little over one foot three inches. Legs and toes, reddish brown; claws, blackish.

The young assume the adult plumage after the first moult, but are much more spotted, and most extensively and almost dazzlingly so, and in a strikingly handsome manner; with age the spots gradually become less. The bill is at first shorter than in the old bird; it is blackish brown with paler edges, the upper mandible having a slight notch close to the tip, which becomes obsolete in the adult; iris, brown. The whole plumage is a dull, uniform, lustreless light greyish brown, except the chin, which is much paler, approaching to greyish white. In this stage it has been described as a separate species, under the name of the Solitary Starling or Solitary Thrush. Legs and toes, reddish brown; the claws, dusky, are at first shorter than in the old bird.

An albino variety was shot at Westray, in Orkney, in the spring of 1846. These not very unfrequently occur, also buff-coloured ones. Mr. Chaffey, of Dodington, Kent, has in his possession two of these birds, pure white, shot in the Isle of Sheppy, and also another cream-coloured one. Mr. Charles Eaton, of Ipswich, writes me word that he has another of the last-named variety, shot by him at Branford, on the 21st. of July, 1852.



RED-WINGED STARLING.

# RED-WINGED STARLING.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD. RED-WINGED MAIZE-BIRD.
MARSH BLACKBIRD. SWAMP BLACKBIRD. CORN-THIEF.
MAIZE-THIEF. STARLING.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Sturnus prædatorius,* | Lubbock. Wilson. |
| *Icterus phœnicurus,* | Buonaparte. |
| *Agelaius phœnicurus,* | Swainson and Richardson. |

*Sturnus*—A Starling. *Prædatorius*—Predatory.

This handsome bird is an American species, and as abundant there, throughout the whole of the northern continent, as here it is rare.

One, a male in nearly adult plumage, was shot near Rollesby Broad, twelve miles from Norwich, in Norfolk, in the month of June, 1842; and another was said to have been seen in company with it at the time. The circumstance was recorded by the Rev. Richard Lubbock, in the 'Zoologist,' volume i, page 317. Another was shot in some reeds at Shepherds' Bush, about three miles from London, on the Uxbridge road, in the autumn of 1844. Edwards had previously referred to another specimen, likewise shot in the neighbourhood of London.

This Starling migrates southwards, for the most part, as winter begins to come on, that is to say, about the 1st. of November, and again retraces its way in the spring, commencing its return at the end of March, or even earlier, but seldom completing it before the beginning of May. Numerous, but small parties, observable at all hours of the day in constant succession, travel together.

Similar in its habits to our English species, the bird before us is social and gregarious, and as the shades of evening begin to close in, millions assemble together in the marshes and beds of reeds, and there, unless disturbed, they pass the night. If, however, a gun is fired, up 'en masse' the whole population arises, and performs every variety of evolution in the air, now wheeling high overhead, now gliding close to the surface, silent while on the wing, but commencing a loud and clamorous chuckling on alighting, after which they remain quiet during the rest of the night. The vast and countless multitudes of these birds which thus unite together, present in their various phases an aspect which Wilson describes as grand and even sublime. At times they come on like a huge black cloud, driven before the wind with impetuous force, or suddenly rise from the ground with a noise like thunder. Now they alight on a sudden, descending to some resting-place like a torrent, and, again on the wing, they present a splendid appearance, the innumerable wings of the vast body glittering like an army, their vermilion uniform shining all the brighter in the sun from its contrast with the rest of their sable plumage: or the latter is turned towards you—a changeable 'Rouge et noir,' your indulgence, however, in the amusement of which will leave no vexation or trouble behind, but the peaceful delight which the contemplation of nature never fails to yield to the devout.

Towards the beginning or middle of August the young birds begin to fly in flocks, and chiefly associate by themselves, there being sometimes not more than two or three old males observed in a flock of many thousands. These birds are sold for eating, but they are considered rather dry and tough. Like their European cousins, they become very docile in captivity, and may easily be taught to repeat short phrases, or to whistle tunes with great exactness. While the female is sitting, and still more so after the young are hatched, the male exhibits great uneasiness if any intruder approaches the nest; and if the danger appears to increase, his anxiety and restlessness increase with it, until the neighbouring birds are alarmed likewise, and mingle their notes of distress and agitation with his.

An astonishing quantity of grain is devoured by these birds, who are therefore under the ban of the farmer, but, says Audubon, that they have proved highly serviceable before they have commenced their ravages is equally certain. As soon as the corn begins to germinate, the Red-winged Starling, in company with other devastating species, is occupied throughout the day in pulling up and devouring the plants, returning to the work of spoliation as often as driven away. Wheat, maize, and corn of every species is preyed on, rice also, and all manner of seeds and berries, and likewise insects and caterpillars, but these latter only, or chiefly, when in lack of the former, though as they search for them at such times with unremitting assiduity in every situation and place, the numbers they destroy must be incalculable. When the corn is reaped, they assume the right of gleaning in the fields, and not content with this privilege, they afterwards follow the crop to the farm-yard, and there too pilfer all that they can from the harvest-home. Any indirect benefit therefore that they may have been of is lost sight of in the presence of the direct injury, and tens of thousands of the marauding multitudes are slaughtered, though still no apparent diminution is made. At night the reed-beds are set fire to, and as the cloud of birds rises from it, a regiment of shooters discharge volley after volley, and the field is strewn with the slain. In like manner the Indians, who usually plant their corn in one common field, employ all the boys of the village throughout the day in tending their growing crop, and, each armed with a bow and arrows, these incipient Lockesleys contrive with great expertness to destroy large numbers. The Hawks too of various kinds dash into their close ranks, and though the flock instantly opens on all sides, on the principle of 'sauve qui peut,' some are almost sure to become victims.

Alexander Wilson and Charles Lucien Buonaparte, in their 'American Ornithology,' give the following calculation of the good effected by these birds in return for whatever grain they may consume:—'Their general food at this season, as well as during the early part of summer, consists of caterpillars and various other larvæ, the silent but deadly enemies of all vegetation, and whose secret and insidious attacks are more to be dreaded by the husbandman than the combined forces of the whole feathered tribe together. For those vermin the Starlings search with great diligence, in the ground, at the roots of plants, in orchards and meadows, as well as among buds, leaves, and blossoms; and from their known voracity, the multitudes of those insects which they destroy must be immense. Let me illustrate this by a short computation: if we suppose each bird, on an average, to devour fifty of these larvæ in a day, (a very moderate allowance,) a single pair, in four months, the usual time such food is sought after, will consume upwards of twelve thousand. It is believed that not less than a million pairs of these birds are distributed over the whole extent of the United States in summer; whose food, being nearly the same, would swell the amount of vermin destroyed to twelve thousand millions. But the number of young birds may be fairly estimated at double that of their parents; and as these are constantly fed on larvæ for at least three weeks, making only the same allowance for them as for the old ones, their share would amount to four thousand two hundred millions; making a grand total of sixteen thousand two hundred millions of noxious insects destroyed in the space of four months by this single species! The combined ravages of such a hideous host of vermin would be sufficient to spread famine and desolation over a wide extent of the richest and best cultivated country on earth.

All this, it may be said, is mere supposition. It is, however, supposition founded on known and acknowledged facts. I have never dissected any of these birds in spring without receiving the most striking and satisfactory proof of these facts; and though, in a matter of this kind, it is impossible to ascertain precisely the amount of the benefits derived by agriculture from this, and many other species of our birds, yet, in the present case, I cannot resist the belief that the services of this species, in spring, are far more important and beneficial than the value of all that portion of corn which a careful and active farmer permits himself to lose by it.'

The Red-winged Starlings are very vociferous, even in the depth of winter, so that the dejected face of nature is enlivened by their ceaseless notes, and likewise during their migrations a constant strain of conversation is kept up, which, as harbinging the return of spring, is a welcome sound even to those who are doomed to suffer from their ravages. Their most common note resembles the syllables 'con-quer-ree,' others are like the sound produced by the filing of a saw, some are more guttural, and others remarkably clear; both male and female have an ordinary 'chuck.'

About the middle of April the birds pair, and nidification commences the last week in April, or the beginning of May, or even later, according to the latitude in which they happen to be.

The nest is placed variously in a bush or tree, a few feet from the ground, or in a tussock of rushes or tuft of grass, or even, and not unfrequently, on the ground. It is composed of rushes and long tough grass, and lined with finer portions of the latter; the rushes are interlaced among the surrounding twigs if in a tree, or among the rushes if on the ground, in which latter case the whole structure is less elaborate than in the former. Several nests are often built in immediate neighbourhood to each other.

The eggs, about five in number, are of a pale bluish white colour, encircled at the larger end with spots and streaks of dark reddish brown, with a few others scattered here and there, and some faint blots of purple grey and lines and dashes of black.

Male; length, nine inches; bill, shining black; iris, dark brown; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, black; chin, throat, and breast, black; back black. The wings expand to the width of one foot two inches; the feathers covering the bend are red; greater wing coverts, black; lesser wing coverts, orange yellow; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, black; greater and lesser under wing coverts, black. Tail, black, rounded in form, the three outer feathers on each side being graduated. Legs, toes, and claws, shining black.

The female is considerably smaller than the male; length, seven inches and a quarter; bill, glossy black; it runs a considerable distance off the forehead, and is rather prominent there; the tip is sharp, but rather flattened; over and under the eye run two streaks of pale reddish cream-colour, and behind it is a streak of brownish black. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, black, each feather edged with pale brown or whitish; chin, pale reddish cream-colour; throat and breast, thickly streaked with black and white, inclining to cream-colour on the latter; back, black, each feather edged with pale brown or whitish, giving it a mottled appearance. The wings extend to one foot in width; they are without the red; lesser wing coverts, black, each feather edged with pale brown or whitish; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, blackish brown. Tail, blackish brown. Legs, toes, and claws, glossy black.

The young birds at first resemble the female, but have the plumage more broadly margined with brown, which gradually, but only gradually, wears out, it being only very old males that are without any remains of it. The lesser wing coverts in the males soon shew the red, but at first pale, inclining to orange, and only partially diffused; it becomes complete by the following spring.

# DIPPER.

COMMON DIPPER. EUROPEAN DIPPER. WATER OUZEL.
WATER CROW.

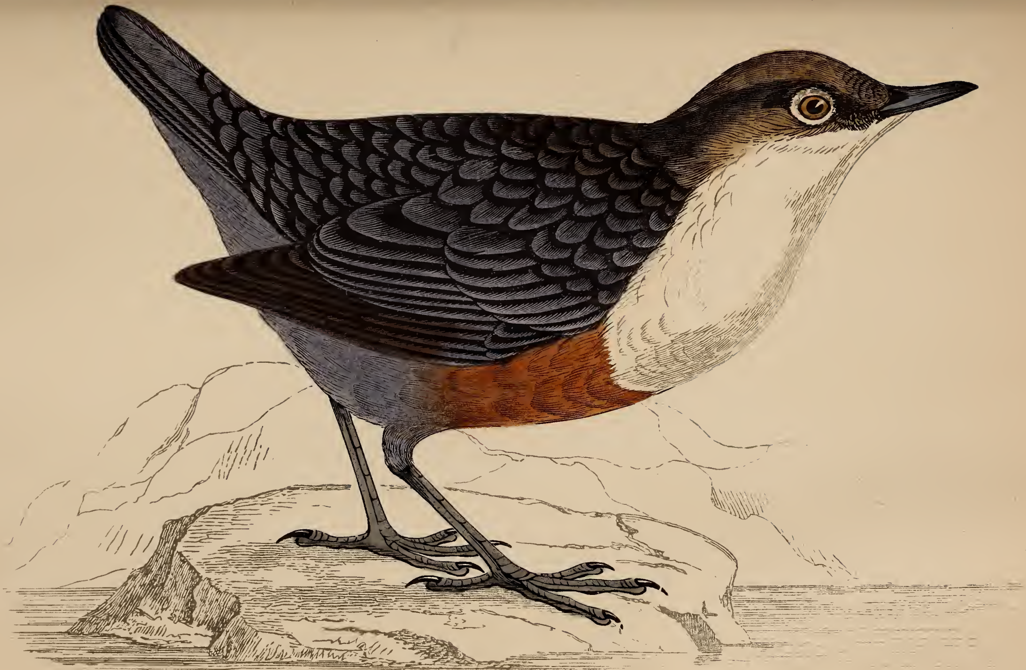
| | |
|---|---|
| *Cinclus aquaticus,* | Fleming. Selby. |
| *Turdus cinclus,* | Pennant. |
| *Sturnus cinclus,* | Montagu. |

*Cincius*--A bird that has the habit of moving its tail.
*Aquaticus*—Pertaining to water.

As you wade down the peerless Wharfe, the Queen of Yorkshire rivers—Bolton Abbey stands upon its bank, and the waters that have flowed past Kilnsea Crag and now lave the foundations of the beautiful ruin, are shortly pent in by the memorable 'Strid'—as you wade down the 'Lordly Wharfe' in the month of October, fly-fishing for grayling, and watch the Dipper fronting you with his snow-white breast, now dipping up and down on some little island stone, now walking into and disappearing under the water, now emerging and crossing to the land, and now, like a Kingfisher, flying straight past you up the stream; as you rise a fish, or perhaps two at once, and again pass on, and look around you on Netherside, or Barden Tower, or Arthington Hall, or Harewood Castle, the bright sun shining above you, and the clear autumnal breeze invigorating your whole frame, you will say, if you have a mind for true enjoyment,

> 'Flumina amem sylvasque inglorius.'

Seldom, however, is it that, except as a very rare relaxation, I can now myself follow this and the like pursuits; I have not forgotten, and have to remember 'From henceforth thou shalt catch men.'



DIPPER.

This anomalous bird is found in Russia, Siberia, and Scandinavia generally, and also among the Alpine streams, and in Germany and the northern parts of Spain, namely, in the Pyrenean range. In Asia it has also been known.

It is a native of the mountainous districts of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, frequenting the streams which there rise, and following their course into the more lowland country, especially in severe weather, when it betakes itself to the rapids and falls; occasionally it is to be seen on the pebbled and shallow margin of a lake; but it is only a chance straggler in any other parts. I have seen it in Yorkshire, and on the Goit, which divides Derbyshire from Cheshire. In Devonshire it is not uncommon on the rivers that have their origin in Dartmoor; also in Cornwall, Westmorland, and Cumberland. It has been seen at Wyrardisbury, on the Colne, and on the Mole, near Esher, in the neighbourhood of London; also in Essex. The Rev. R. P. Alington has seen one in Lincolnshire, in the summer, sitting on a stone in the middle of a small stream called Hallington Beck, near Louth. In Norfolk one was shot at Burgh, in the month of November, 1806. In the Hebrides it is well known.

The Dipper's habits are retired, in unison with the sequestered and secluded situations which it loves. More than two are rarely seen in company, excepting indeed in the summer, while the parents and the young still associate together: four or five may however sometimes be seen frequenting the same stream. That this bird has the power of walking at the bottom of the water, is an established fact. The argument against its being able to do so, is that to the reasoning powers of some persons it does not seem possible. Its feet are admirably adapted for holding on to the stones over which it makes its way, and for stemming at the same time the force of the current; for that no effort is required to keep its place below the surface, is what no one has said. On dry land it is by no means an expert walker, being there evidently out of its element; it perches on the isolated stones or rocks around which the rapid stream eddies, or on some projecting crag or mound on the bank. In it walks, keeping on the bottom as long as you can follow it, and doubtless after you have lost sight of it; or alighting on the surface, plunges beneath, and makes its way downwards, exerting its wings to aid it in its descent. And agile it is, quick and dexterous in all these its movements; generally proceeding against the stream: now it emerges, and presently, with erected tail, crouching body, head drawn back, and wings slightly drooped, is prepared for another dip. It does not traverse much space below the surface, but is soon up again, returning to its former or some other neighbouring place of temporary rest, which it regains either by swimming or wading; and after several of these forays, performed with quiet activity, it wings its way to some neighbouring rapid. The young are able to dive even before they are fully fledged.

Its flight is rather rapid, strong and even, effected by regular pulsations of the wings.

Various water insects, and beetles, and the larvæ of these, are its food.

The song of this interesting bird is melodious and lively, though short. It is to be heard in sunny weather at all seasons of the year—a sweet accompaniment to the murmuring music of the rippling trout-stream, which soothes the ear and the heart of the solitary fly-fisher, as he quietly wends his way along, at peace with all the world. Its common note is a mere 'chit,' which it utters both when perched on some stone and when flying along the stream.

Nidification begins about the middle of April.

The nest, which is cleverly concealed, and large, measuring ten or twelve inches in diameter, and seven or eight in depth, being domed, is well compacted of moss and grass, and well lined with leaves. It is placed in some cavity in a rock, or under the protection of some overhanging stone in the immediate neighbourhood of the rippling stream or murmuring waterfall, its favourite haunt. Different specimens however vary in size as well as shape, adapted doubtless to the circumstances of the spot they are placed in, some being a couple of inches less than the size just spoken of. The aperture is in front, from three to four inches in width, and about one and a half in height. Mr. Macgillivray mentions one, described to him by Thomas Durham Weir, Esq., which was built in an angle between two fragments of rocks under a small cascade, and although the water fell upon part of the dome, the compactness with which it was put together rendered it impenetrable.

The birds are strongly attached to their accustomed building-place, and one pair, or at least a pair, have been known to occupy the same haunt for thirty-one years, rearing three broods in the year, and four young ones to each brood.

The eggs, from four to six in number, are white, and of a regular oval form.

Male; length, seven inches and three quarters; bill, bluish black, tinged with brown at the edges; iris, pale brown, with a ring of black in the middle; the margin of the eyelids white; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, dark brown; chin, throat, and breast on the upper part, pure white, on its lower part chesnut, blending towards the tail with deep grey; on the sides it is deep grey; back, very dark grey, each feather broadly margined with black.

The wings, which extend one third down the tail, and consist of nineteen quill feathers, have the first, which is very short and narrow, less than half the length of the second, which is of nearly, but not quite, the same length as the third; the fourth a trifle shorter than the latter: the wings extend to the width of one foot and a quarter of an inch. Greater and lesser wing coverts, brownish black, the tips of the first lighter greyish black; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dark brown, tinged with grey. Tail, short, even, and of twelve feathers; upper tail coverts, brownish black; under tail coverts, deep grey, slightly tipped with pale brown. Legs and toes, bluish grey, tinged with brown; claws, dusky.

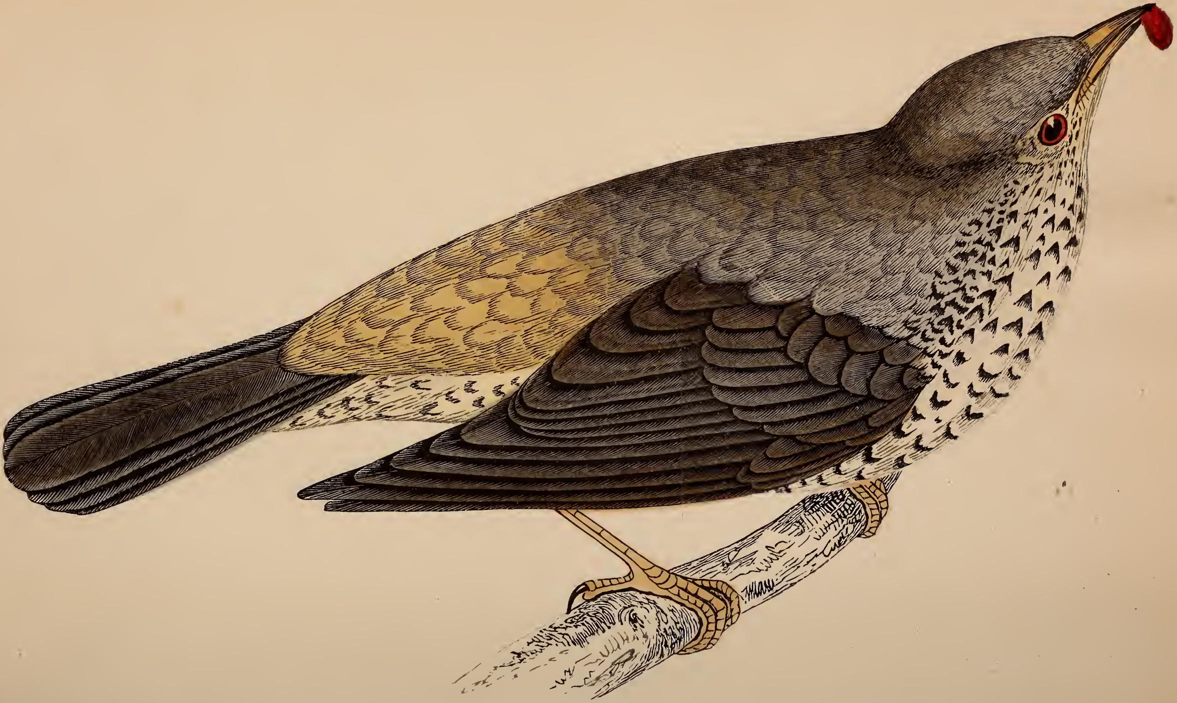
The female closely resembles the male; length, seven inches and a quarter. The head, crown, neck, and nape are rather a lighter brown; the breast is also a duller rust-colour. The wings extend to one foot in width.

In the young the bill is bluish black, tinged with brown at the edges; iris, pale brown, with a ring of black in the middle, as in the adult; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, dull greyish brown; chin, white; throat and breast above, pale buff, the feathers tipped with blackish brown; below and on the sides, grey, mixed with cream-colour, with darker lines; back, dull greyish brown, the feathers margined with brownish black.

Greater and lesser wing coverts, brownish black, the latter tipped with greyish white; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, brownish black, the latter tipped with greyish white. Tail, brownish black, tipped with brownish white; under tail coverts, dull grey, mixed with cream-colour. Legs and toes, bluish grey, tinged with brown, paler in front; claws, brown, margined with whitish. After the first moult, which takes place in

September, they nearly assume the adult plumage, but not entirely so until the second change.

I refer my readers to a demonstrative and most conclusive paper by my brother, Beverley R. Morris, Esq., M.D., the Editor of 'The Naturalist,' vol. i, pages 5 to 11 of that periodical, 'On the power that certain Water-Birds possess of remaining partially submerged in deep water.'



MISSEL THRUSH.

# MISSEL THRUSH.

MISSELTOE THRUSH. STORM-COCK.
MISSEL-BIRD. SHRITE. SHRIKE-COCK. HOLM THRUSH.

PENN Y LLWIN, OF THE ANCIENT BRITISH.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Turdus viscivorus,* | LINNÆUS. LATHAM. |
| *Merula viscivora,* | SELBY. |

*Turdus*—A Thrush. *Viscivorus. Viscus*—The misseltoe.
*Voro*—To devour.

THIS bird is a native of Europe, being found in Russia and Scandinavia generally, as also in Germany, France, Thuringia, and Italy; in Holland it is rare. It moves to the centre of the Continent from both extremes in the winter.

In England it is plentiful in all parts of the country.

In the south of Scotland it is not uncommon, but in the central parts it is very rare, and in the extreme north entirely unknown.

In Ireland it is also generally distributed.

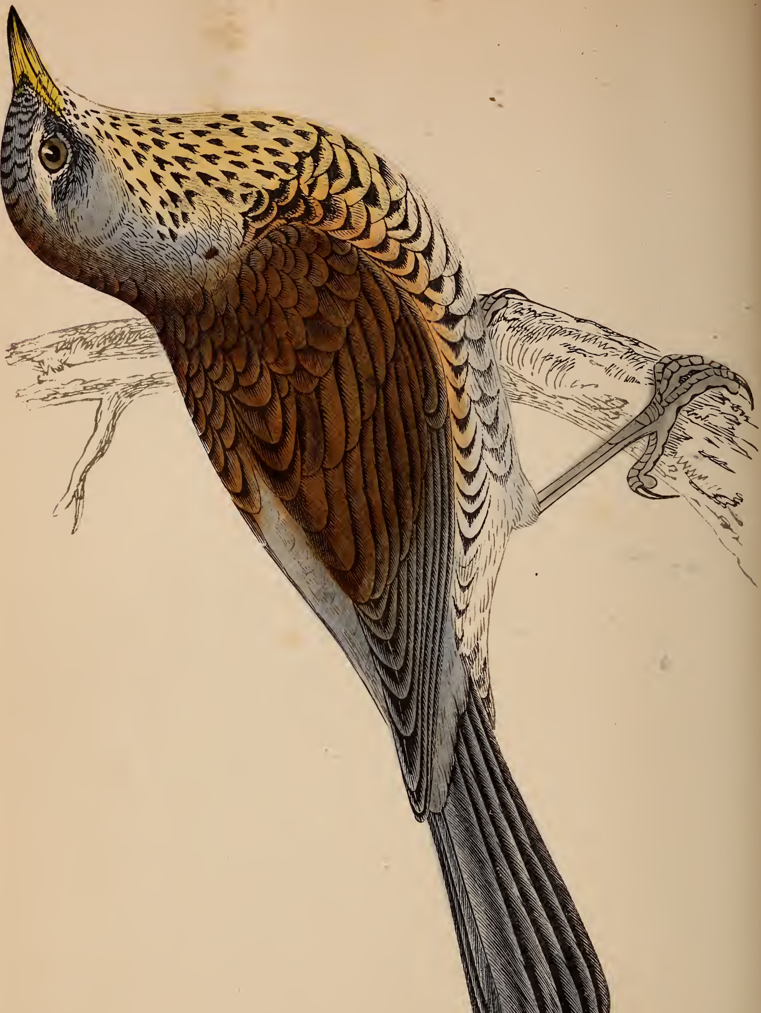
In winter these birds, at all times permanently resident as a species, seem more numerous than at other seasons, so that it is thought that their numbers are added to by arrivals from more northern countries, such migration occurring towards the end of October.

They certainly are of a pugnacious, not to say of a predatory disposition, and are accordingly objects of dislike and assault to many of their feathered neighbours; they are also quarrelsome one with another. They are frequently seen in flocks of from a dozen to twenty, and from fifty to sixty or seventy; and in this case are often mistaken for Fieldfares when at a distance· they seem to be more numerous in some places than they formerly used to be. They are tolerably good to eat. When feeding on the ground they disperse rather widely from each other, hopping briskly about, and pecking up any thing they can find. If danger is descried or suspected, an alarm is given by some sentinel by a low harsh scream, which is responded to by a general removal, if necessary. In flying, too, the individuals do not keep very close together, and while proceeding, a low scream is now and then uttered, and when some desirable place for alighting presents itself, they either suddenly descend to it, still at some little distance apart from each other, or fly about over the field for some time before doing so.

In March the flocks break up, and about the end of that month, or towards the middle of April, the individuals that have composed them now unite into pairs, and frequent some wood, or garden, or orchard, the latter being a very frequent choice, from whence excursions are made into the neighbouring gardens and fields. The small parties that again are seen together after the breeding-season, are doubtless in the first instance the members of the family. Mr. Macgillivray has seen a flock of seventeen so early as the 25th. of June—the parent birds would seem to pair for life. The female is often very fearless when sitting, and has been known to fly at an intruder, as both birds will at a Magpie or Hawk. They are easily reared from the nest, and become very tame.

Their flight, which is undulated, is rather heavy, though quick on occasion, and performed by a series of flappings, with short intervals of cessation; on first alighting the bird stands for a short time with the head raised, the back and tail deflected, and the wings slightly drooping.

This species was imagined by the ancients to have a peculiar fondness for the berries of the misseltoe, of which indeed it was supposed, according to the old proverb, 'Turdus malum sibi,' to be a sort of foster-parent. Authors, says Aristotle, love their books on the same principle that parents love their children, as being a sort of reproduction of themselves—mine for my 'History of British Birds,' I may here take the opportunity of thankfully observing, has been not a little enhanced by the extensive approbation of the public—a wise and discerning public—and in the same way, if there were any truth in the old opinion, the bird might love the berry; but the supposition is not adequately borne out by the fact.



FIELDFARE.

The Missel-bird feeds on the berries of the mountain ash, the service tree, the juniper, the yew, holly, and ivy, hips and haws, grain and seeds of various kinds, caterpillars, beetles, and other insects, worms and snails. In hard weather, when food is scarce, it will drive away other Thrushes and Blackbirds from the trees where it is feeding. In gardens it commits some damage among the fruit; nay, it has been abundantly ascertained that it will, at all events when it has young, destroy other small birds. One has been seen flying off with a young Hedge-Sparrow in its bill, closely pursued by the bereaved parent; and another has been detected in the very act of killing a young Thrush—in fact, this carnivorous propensity is quite common to it; the eggs of other birds therefore also, as may be supposed, it likewise makes a practice of abstracting.

W. F. W. Bird, Esq. relates in 'The Naturalist,' volume ii, page 216, that one was caught in a gamekeeper's trap, which had been baited with the egg of a small bird. The late William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, says that Butcher Bird is the term applied to it in the county of Donegal, in Ireland.

As a proof with regard to the present species also of the good effected by the destruction of insects, the following communication to Mr. Macgillivray, may be adduced—three young ones only had to be fed:—'At twenty minutes past four o'clock they commenced the labours of the day. From that time until five they fed their young only five times; from five to six three times; from six to seven six times; from seven to eight twelve times; from eight to nine six times; from nine to ten four times; from ten to eleven five times; from eleven to twelve four times; from twelve to one three times; from one to two three times; from three to four two times; from four to five two times; from five to six two times; from six to seven five times; and from seven to eight only once;' in all sixty-six times, each time bringing several large worms and snails, and this for the smallest usual number of young, and in addition to the food they must have taken themselves. Before venturing to the nest they generally alighted two or three times, remaining some seconds upon each of them, and looking around with the greatest jealousy and circumspection.

The song of this bird, which is of rather an inferior quality, is commenced, or rather carried on, in the earliest beginning of the year; even in January, in some seasons, in the southern counties, and in February and March in the more northern ones. The male bird ceases his song while the nest is being made, and during the incubation of the eggs, nor is it again heard till the following year, unless indeed the hen or the young be destroyed, in which case it is resumed or continued. The song is continuous, lasting from two to five minutes at a time; a pause then intervenes of longer or shorter duration, generally of two or three minutes, after which it is again taken up. In one instance it has been heard for fully ten minutes without cessation. Perched on the topmost bough of some tall tree that quivers to the blast, and heralding, or bidding as it were defiance to the boding gale of wind, the Storm-cock whistles his wonted lay, and gains from the observant countryman his well-earned name. Other birds retire 'with bated breath' to the shelter of the lowly grove, or the humble hedge, but he braves the tempest out, and sings his song with Æolus himself. This species has sometimes been heard to sing when on the wing, but this is not its usual practice. Its ordinary note is a harsh scream, which when flying off after being disturbed, it is often heard to utter, as well as when attacking some other bird.

Preparations for the nest begin very early. Building has been observed to have been commenced on the 3rd. and the 5th. of April, and nests with eggs have been found on the 6th. and 7th. of that month, as also at the same place so late as the 26th. of May in the same year.

The nest, which is a loose structure, is a compilation of twigs, small sticks, straws, grasses, leaves, lichens, wool, or mosses, compacted inwardly with mud, mixed with grasses and small roots, and lined with finer grasses, roots, and moss, frequently with grass alone; sometimes the outside is partly covered with lichens and mosses. The width is about four inches and a half, the depth two and three fourths, and the thickness of the sides an inch and three quarters. Mr. Hewitson mentions one nest of which the foundation was of mud, strongly cemented to, and nearly encircling the branches between which it was fixed. It is often placed in very exposed situations in the hollow caused by the divergence of the branches from the trunk, at a height of ten or fifteen feet from the ground, but nevertheless the erection of it has often not been observed until after it has been fully completed.

Shy, too, as the bird is at other times, in its nidification it is not deterred from any appropriate situation by the near propinquity of a house, even where persons are constantly passing and repassing. This has been noticed in repeated instances, and has occurred close to my own residence of Nafferton Vicarage, within a dozen yards of the house, and with hardly any attempt at concealment. The same tree will be often returned to year after year, if the birds be undisturbed, and Frederick Bond, Esq., of Kingsbury, has known the same nest used twice in the same season. They will suffer other species to build near to them, so close as within a foot distance, and that without any molestation even during the time of incubation, when to those who casually approach their nest they display unqualified hostility.

The eggs are from three or four to five in number, of a greenish or reddish white colour, spotted irregularly with reddish brown or purple red: they vary in size as well as in colour.

Two broods are produced in the year, and the young of the first sometimes unite with those of the second in one flock.

Male; weight, nearly five ounces; length, eleven inches and a half; bill, dark brown, the upper mandible pale yellow at its base—from its base a cream-coloured streak goes over the eye; iris, dark brown. Head on the sides, yellowish white, on the crown, neck on the back, and nape, greyish olive brown; chin, throat, and breast, pale yellowish white, each feather tipped with black, the throat only faintly so; on the upper part the spots are triangular, on the middle and sides oblong and transverse, and lower down smaller; back, greyish olive brown, lighter on the lower part.

The wings, of eighteen quills, which extend to half the length of the tail, and expand to the width of one foot seven inches and a half, have the first very small, the second about equal to the fifth, the third and fourth the longest, and equal to each other in length; underneath, the wings are grey; greater and lesser wing coverts, deep greyish brown, edged with a lighter shade; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, deep brown, narrowly margined with greyish yellow on the outer webs; greater and lesser under wing coverts, greyish white, much observable when the bird is on the wing. The tail, which is rather long and slightly rounded, is greyish brown, the feathers slightly margined on the outer edge with yellowish, and the two outer ones more or less tipped with greyish white; underneath, it is grey; the under tail coverts have two longitudinal dusky bands, their middle part and tip white, and the margins pale yellowish. Legs and toes, pale reddish or yellowish brown; claws, brownish black. In summer the plumage becomes considerably worn and faded: the moult commences towards the end of summer, and is completed by the end of November.

The female is nearly equal to the male in size, and a little paler in colour. Length, ten inches and rather over three quarters to eleven inches; the breast is paler than in the male; the wings expand to the width of one foot six or seven inches.

In the young the bill is light reddish brown, the upper mandible dusky; head and crown, pale yellowish brown, with a white spot in the centre of each feather; neck on the back, and nape, pale yellowish brown, with a yellowish grey mark in the centre of each feather, and the tip dark brown; chin, white; throat and breast, pale yellowish, the latter with a triangular-shaped brownish black mark on the tip of the feathers; back, pale yellowish brown, with a yellowish grey mark in the centre of each feather, and the tip dark brown. Greater wing coverts, brown, with broad edges of pale yellowish buff; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, brown, the latter margined with pale yellowish buff. Legs and toes, light reddish brown; claws, brownish. At the first moult, which is completed by the end of November, the adult plumage is assumed.

White and pied varieties have occasionally occurred. A young bird of a pure white colour, with light yellow legs and beak, was shot by Mr. Hames, in his garden at Heavitree, near Exeter, on the 8th. of July, 1851. Mr. Macgillivray mentions one preserved in the museum of the University of Edinburgh, of which the upper parts resembled those of a young Missel Thrush, while on the lower black was the predominant colour; and although there were irregular light-coloured markings on the neck and breast, there were none of those which are so characteristic of the genus.

The plate is from a design by the Rev. R. P. Alington.

# FIELDFARE.

FELDFARE. FELT. FELTFARE. BLUE-BACK.
BLUE-TAIL. BLUE-FELT.

*Turdus pilaris,* LINNÆUS. LATHAM.

*Turdus*—A Thrush. *Pilaris*—............?

THE Fieldfare, though of unpretending colours, is an attractive bird in the eye of the ornithologist; it is indigenous in Europe, in Prussia, Poland, and Austria, where it remains throughout the year: in Russia, Sweden and Norway, Siberia, and Kamtschatka it is only found in summer, and in France, Switzerland, and the other more southerly parts of the continent, it is, as with us, only a winter visitor; and as such extends its flight to Majorca and Minorca, and in Asia to different parts of Asia Minor.

It is found in all parts of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.

In Orkney also it is a regular winter visitant.

Fieldfares have been seen by W. F. W. Bird, Esq., in one of the London Parks.

This species is the latest in its arrival of any of our winter birds. Their usual time of arrival is towards the end of October and the middle or latter part of November, and some are said to have been observed on the 9th. and 11th., and other days, of September; but they may have been mistaken, I think, at least in many cases, for the Misseltoe Thrush: Mr. Edward Lambert states in the 'Linnæan Transactions,' volume iii, page 12, that he saw one on the 29th. of that month. They seem to wait for a fair wind before leaving their own shores, arriving here always with the wind from the east or the north-east. Having however found their way hither, they are loath to leave us, and remain till late in April, while many tarry on the coast in flocks, and a few here and there inland, so late as the middle or latter part of May, and some even till the first week in June: the Rev. Gilbert White, of Selborne, mentions one season in which they remained till that time, and others have recorded the like.

The Fieldfare is associated in the mind of every one who has been accustomed to go out with a gun in severe weather, with the idea of frost in the air, and snow upon the ground. Then these birds, usually so shy and wary, are subdued by hunger to a greater or less degree of tameness, and may be approached within gunshot, often within pistol-shot. They are very good eating, though slightly bitter in taste; and are accordingly much sought after even now, as they were by the Romans formerly, and are sold in large numbers in every market. When the storm breaks up, they betake themselves to a farther distance, and to more wild or retired situations; to mountainous districts especially, if any such be in the neighbourhood; there they then find food more congenial to them, the search for which nothing but the necessity forced upon them by the rigours of frost and snow had compelled them to relinquish. Throughout the winter however many frequent the cultivated districts, the favourite berries of the hawthorn supplying them in hard weather with food, and if there be any hedges which have escaped the almost universal low lopping in which high farming delights, there you can approach under cover your once in former days so highly-prized game, and find them in numbers. Everything seen with the magnifying glasses of school days is unduly raised in the imagination, and the Fieldfare looms large in the distance of the landscape, and of the memory retentive of former scenes of pleasure and temporary excitement—'labuntur anni!'

On trees or in hedges they are scarcely so suspicious as on the ground, where you can hardly approach them within a hundred yards, and if the majority fly off first, a few generally 'wait a little longer.'

These birds, as mentioned above, would seem to migrate in a north-easterly direction, and accordingly leave Ireland sooner than Scotland on their return to their native lands, and appear to choose moonlight nights for their flight. While with us they leave the more northerly for more southerly districts, if the winter be a hard one, and at the commencement of some severe snow-storm, when 'across the wold the wind blows cold,' large flights may be seen overhead wending their way to some place of refuge, and again, as soon as there are the earliest symptoms of a change, nay, even before we can perceive any, they begin to return to their former quarters, and therewith to their previous shyness, which dire necessity alone had for the time overcome. If the snow continues long upon the ground, so that their needful supply is exhausted before their ordinary food can be again obtained, thousands are starved to death through the joint wasting of hunger and cold. Sir William Jardine exactly describes their manner when suffering from severity; then when alarmed, he says, instead of the alert rising flight, and the loud chatter of prosperity, they weakly flutter off to the nearest cover, and will scarcely again betake themselves to flight. Some are said to remain in this country to breed. Mr. Allis, in his 'Catalogue of the Birds of Yorkshire,' already referred to, mentions one such instance as having occurred at Lepton, near Huddersfield, in the West-Riding. Other instances are also said to have been known in this country. A nest has been found, it is related, in Kent, and some obtained in Scotland; two are also recorded by the editor of 'Pennant's British Zoology.' In the Orkney Islands a few occasionally stay during the whole year, but have never been known to breed.

These birds go in large flocks, frequently of several hundreds, and commonly in parties of not less than thirty or forty together; occasionally, however, two or three seem to withdraw from the main body, and frequent some quiet and retired hedgerow in company with the Blackbird and the Thrush. Their thought may be to remain to breed, but for the most part, from some cause or other, it is doomed to be an abortive one. They are sometimes rather quarrelsome when engaged in feeding on a common crop. They roost both in trees and on the ground, and in bushes near the latter, but for the most part in the former, in some parts of the country at all events. They often associate with the Redwing, as also with the Missel Thrush and the Throstle. They are said to be not at all shy in the breeding-season in their native countries, but in fact all birds' natures are then temporarily altered more or less in this respect. They are capable of being kept in confinement.

The flight of this species is easy and somewhat slow, performed with slight but rather lengthened undulations, the effect of a series of about a dozen pulsations of the wings, with then as it were an intermission of the effort. While thus proceeding, they utter their wild cry until about to settle, when after wheeling about for a short time they alight. 'After settling,' says Mr. Macgillivray, 'each is seen to stand still with its wings close, but a little drooping, its tail slightly declined, and its head elevated. It then hops rapidly a few steps forward, stops, picks up a seed, an insect, or other article of food, and again proceeds. They generally move in the same direction, always facing the wind if it be high, and those in the rear, especially if left far behind, fly up to the front. When alarmed, they all stand still for a short time, some utter a low scream, and presently all fly off to a distance, or alight on the tall trees in the neighbourhood. There they sit gracefully on the twigs, with their tails declined, and generally with their heads all directed one way, unless they have settled for the purpose of resting or amusing themselves after procuring a sufficiency of food. In fine weather they often enact a concert of long duration, which, although their song is neither loud nor very melodious, is very pleasant.'

The Fieldfare feeds on a variety of food—oats and grain of different kinds, snails, beetles and other insects, caterpillars, chrysalides, worms, and grass, berries, such as those of the hawthorn, the barberry, the juniper, the mountain ash, the blackberry, the wild rose, the ivy, and the holly, and even turnips in extremity, to which latter they do considerable damage, by rendering them exposed, through their depredations, to the action of the weather. Insect food, however, is that which they prefer, but when the season has been favourable to the ripening of the hawthorn berries, and they hang in well-ripened clusters on the sprays, a comely and a beautiful sight, they tempt the bird to forsake the ground for the leafless hedge, even when other food may be to be found elsewhere, and no stress of weather compels to it. When it does, they will come even into gardens near houses to feed on berries, though usually so extremely shy: at such times too the borders of streams are much frequented by them, on account of the thaw there produced by the higher temperature of the water. They swallow also a small quantity of fragments of stone, to aid the trituition of their food.

Their song, which is soft and melodious, is sometimes heard so early as the end of February and the beginning of March, if the season has been mild and propitious.

Their alarm note is a 'yack,' or 'chack, chack, chack,' which whenever heard arrests your attention. They have also a harsh chatter.

Fieldfares build in societies, as many as two hundred nests and upwards having been found within a small circuit of the forest. The same situations appear to be resorted to from year to year from some cause of predilection or other, as with the Rooks.

The nest, which is placed in pine or fir trees, at a height of from four to forty feet from the ground, is made of small sticks, grass, and weeds, cemented together with a small quantity of clay, and lined with fine grass. It is for the most part placed against the trunk of the tree, but sometimes at a considerable distance from it, towards the smaller end of the thicker branches.

The eggs are from three to five or six in number, of a pale bluish green, spotted with dark reddish brown. The hurried flight and loud harsh cries of the owners, if alarmed, readily lead to their discovery.

The young are not able to fly until the first week in August.

Male; weight, four ounces; length, ten inches and a half, to ten and three quarters; bill, orange at the base, most so on the lower mandible, brownish black at the end; the inside of the mouth is also orange; between the bill and the eye there is a black mark, which follows also under it, and a dark line passes backwards in a semicircle. Iris, dark brown, the eyelids are yellow; over the eye is a streak of pale grey, or buff, sometimes inclining to pale yellowish white; there are bristles at the base of the bill. Forehead, slightly tinged with brown; head on the crown, ash grey, most of the feathers having a dusky streak on their centre, most conspicuous in the spring; on the sides it is also ash grey; neck in front and on the sides, light yellowish red, thinly marked with rather elongated triangular-shaped brownish black spots; nape, ash grey; chin and throat, yellowish pale orange streaked with black; breast above, light yellowish red, spotted with triangular-shaped brownish black marks; it is paler, almost white, on the sides, with larger and broader rounded spots, and below it is white or greyish white tinged with red. Back on the upper part, fine dark chesnut brown, on the lower part shaded into bluish grey, conspicuous in flight, whence some of the vernacular names of the species.

The wings, when closed, reach to about the middle of the tail; they expand to the width of one foot five inches and a quarter to one foot six; greater wing coverts, brownish red, edged with a paler shade of grey; lesser wing coverts, brownish red; primaries, greyish black, margined and tipped with pale grey; the first quill feather is extremely small and narrow, the third the longest, the fourth the next, and scarcely longer than the second, which is a little longer than the fifth; the shafts are black; underneath, these feathers are dark slate grey; secondaries, greyish black, the greater part of the outer webs paler brown; greater and lesser under wing coverts, white, plainly shewing when the bird is on the wing. The tail, which is of a deep greyish black, the side feathers greyish towards the end, is long and nearly even, the feathers narrow; underneath, it is dark slate grey; upper tail coverts, ash grey; under tail coverts, white, marked on either side with dusky blots. Legs and toes, dusky brown; claws, blackish brown.

The female closely resembles the male, but is scarcely so large, and rather slighter in shape. Length, ten inches and a half; the bill is darker; the head is more tinged with brown; the throat is paler; the back is less clear in colour, and its lower part is yellowish grey. The wings expand to the width of one foot four inches and a half. The legs and toes are paler than in the male bird.

The young, after the autumn, nearly resemble their parents, but the head is of a less pure blue grey, and the dusky streaks on the crown are larger; the neck in front, and the throat and breast on the upper part, are of a brighter yellowish red, and the sides have the spotted feathers with a patch of white inside the brown mark between it and the light-coloured border. The back, on its lower part, is of a duller blue grey; the greater and lesser under wing coverts also are frequently marked with dusky.

Slight differences as to size and colouring are sometimes observable in this species, and white individuals have occasionally been met with. The Revs. Andrew and Henry Matthews, in their 'Catalogue of the Birds of Oxfordshire and its Neighbourhood,' published in the 'Zoologist,' mention one they possess in which the head and neck are pure white. Mr.

Joseph Duff, of Bishops Auckland, mentions also in the same magazine, page 2386, one in which the fifth, sixth, and seventh quill feathers in each wing were white, the greater coverts white, the scapulars white, the lower part of the back cloudy white, the six middle tail feathers white, with a dark brown bar across the end, and the rest of the tail feathers tipped with white. A variegated one, nearly white, was shot at Hickling, in Norfolk, in 1848. Bewick mentions another, of which the head and neck were yellowish white, the rest of the body nearly of the same colour, mixed with a few brown feathers; the spots on the breast were faint and indistinct, the quill feathers perfectly white, except one or two on each side, which were brown; the tail was marked in a similar manner. Sir William Jardine too observes that the bird is sometimes found with the whole colours of a paler tint, but still keeping their general distribution; and varieties with the head, or head and neck white, or pale grey, are mentioned by Dr. Latham.

# REDWING.

SWINEPIPE. WIND THRUSH.

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| *Turdus Iliacus,* | LINNÆUS. |
| *Merula Iliaca,* | JARDINE. SELBY. |

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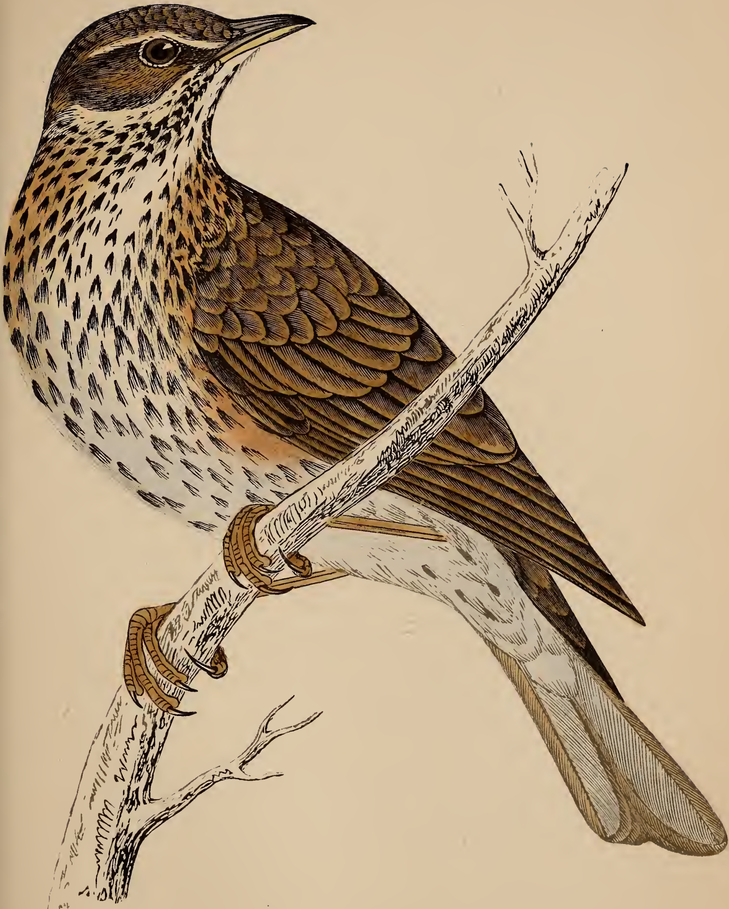
| *Turdus*—A Thrush | *Iliacus*—...........? |

A NATIVE of the far distant regions of the north, and for successive ages unmolested and even unseen by man, the Redwing, till now, has there securely reared her young. The solitude of the lonely forest is however no longer unbroken, and modern travellers pry into the gloomiest depths of the untrodden wilderness, in search, among the various motives which actuate them in their wanderings, of a more accurate knowledge of the habits of the birds that have heretofore passed their summers in the trackless woods. To Mr. Hewitson, the eminent Oologist, for one, the praise of this scientific enterprise is due.

In Europe this pleasing bird is found in Russia, Siberia, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, and the Feroe Islands, and it travels, as winter approaches, into Poland, France, Spain, and Italy. In Asia Minor it has also been seen by Mr. Hugh Edwin Strickland.

It is plentiful in England, Ireland, and Scotland, as also in the Orkney Islands, where it is, as with us, an annual visitor, arriving in October. Like the Fieldfare, a few may be occasionally seen at all seasons. The Rev. Mr. Low was induced to believe that a pair built in Hoy, but he was unable to detect their nest.

The Redwing is a migratory bird, leaving here at the end of April or beginning of May, though sometimes remaining even till the middle of that month on the eastern side of the



REDWING.

kingdom. White, of Selborne, mentions that in one very cold and backward season they lingered in Hampshire till June. It returns at the end of October or the beginning of November. One instance of its remaining here to build its nest has been obligingly communicated to me by Captain Turton, of the Third Dragoon Guards.—In 1836, a nest was found on the margin of a brook, which afterwards becomes the Leven, on his father's property at Kildale, in Cleveland. The late John Bell, Esq., M.P. for Thirsk, shot the female bird which had been previously wounded: the nest contained four eggs. The late Mr. Macgillivray, whom I much regret to have thus to designate—in the accuracy of his observations as an ornithologist he stood unrivalled—relates that he has known individuals remain in the island of Harris so late as the 25th. of May, and at Rodhill, there Mr. Bullock has recorded that he found a nest in the year 1828. Other such instances have occurred at Godalming, in Surrey, and near Barnet, in Middlesex. The migration of this species is believed to take place at night; and the unerring direction of nature prescribes the exact time for it most properly to take place.

While with us these birds are gregarious, going in flocks, often of considerable magnitude. They are rather shy, and will not permit anything like a near approach, unless it be when the snow has continued for some time upon the ground, and all-compelling hunger overcomes their fear of ordinary dangers. At such times they are very abundant on the cliffs, and near the shores of the sea, where the saline nature of the atmosphere and of the marine vegetation gives them something of an exceptional livelihood. Ordinarily, if alarmed in a field, they betake themselves to the vantage-ground of any neighbouring trees, or else fly off to a distance on the approach of a stranger. In the countries where they build, they will drop down from their perch on the top of a tree, and hide in the thick brushwood. They are good birds to eat, and are procured in numbers for the table. They associate in some degree with Fieldfares, and even with Missel Thrushes, but only temporarily, as their flight is different. They may readily be preserved in a large aviary.

Their flight is quick and a little undulated, performed by a series of flappings of the wings, with short intervals, during which they descend a little.

Insects afford their 'Preferential shares,' and in search of these they are seen in open weather on the ground in the fields, where, standing for a while motionless, with the head turned towards the wind, if there be any, the wings slightly drooped, and the tail straight or a little raised, each individual, on perceivng what it is in search of, a worm, caterpillar, beetle or other insect, hops briskly to the spot, and makes its meal. When such food is hidden by snow, they resort to hawthorn and holly bushes, and partake of this frugal fare; and if this supply in turn fails, they are compelled to seek the margins of streams, where some scanty resources may still be to be found, and, as before observed, turn also to the neighbourhood of the ocean. In very severe seasons numbers perish from the effects of cold and hunger. The years 1799, 1814, and 1822 were peculiarly fatal to them.

The song of the Redwing, a veritable 'Swedish Nightingale,' known indeed in the northern countries by the name of that bird, is described as being exceedingly beautiful. 'Its high and varied notes,' says Linnæus, in his 'Tour in Lapland,' 'rival those of the Nightingale herself.' It is loud, sweet, clear, and musical, with yet a wildness, which gives it an inexpressible charm in the ear of the lover of such strains as Jenny Lind has so enchantingly cultivated, and which give such expression to her Norse songs. It has however an ordinary note as well, and about the end of March, and the beginning of April, large numbers of these birds may be seen collected together at the top of a tree, and uttering together a not unpleasing kind of murmuring concert, more or less loud: singly heard, however, their ordinary note is a rather harsh clear scream.

The nest is placed in the centre of a thorn or other bush, alder, birch, or other tree, and is made of moss, roots, and dry grass outwardly, cemented together with clay, and lined inwardly with finer grass.

The eggs are said to be found in June, and to be towards six in number, of a pale bluish green, spotted with reddish brown.

Meyer says that two broods are reported to be reared in the year.

Male; length, from about eight inches and a quarter to eight and three quarters; bill, brownish black above and on the end of the lower mandible; the inner half is orange yellow, as are the edges of the upper part: a band of yellowish white runs from the base of the bill half way down the neck, and a continuous line of closely-set dark spots. Iris, brown

—over it, and extending to the back of the head, is a broad band of yellowish white; the feathers of the eyelids are whitish; a black streak passes, as it were, through the eye; there are a few bristly feathers along the base of the upper mandible. Head on the crown, dark olive brown, on the sides, dark dusky brown, streaked with brownish white, the shafts of the feathers being paler; neck in front and on the sides, white, tinged with rufous yellow, each feather with an elongated brownish black spot at the end and on the centre; nape, olive brown; chin and throat, dull white; breast on the middle and lower part, greyish white, with brown spots, pale on the sides, which are partly red; back, olive brown, paler on the lower part.

The wings are rather long, and of eighteen quills; the first is extremely small, the fourth the longest, the third a little shorter, the second and fifth about equal. The wings extend to the width of from about one foot one inch and three quarters to one foot two and a quarter; primaries, deep brown, their outer webs yellowish brown, the inner webs towards the base are tinged with red; underneath, they are grey; secondaries, deep brown, the three last tipped with greyish white; tertiaries, deep brown; greater and lesser under wing coverts, red. The tail feathers are rather narrow, the colour brown, the outermost feather with a white spot on the inner web at the end; underneath, it is grey; upper tail coverts, olive brown; under tail coverts, dull white. Legs and toes, pale reddish brown; claws, dusky, orange-coloured underneath: they are long, slender, and a good deal curved.

The female very closely resembles the male in general appearance; length, from seven inches and three quarters to about eight and a quarter; the bill has the yellow colour more dull than in the male; the markings on the neck are not so black, and the red on the sides of the breast is not so bright. The wings expand to the width of from one foot one inch and a quarter to one foot one and three quarters; the under wing coverts are less brightly marked with red.

White, cream-coloured, and variegated individuals are said to have been observed.

# THRUSH.

THROSTLE. SONG THRUSH. COMMON THRUSH. MAVIS.

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| *Turdus musicus,* | PENNANT. MONTAGU. |
| *Merula musica,* | SELBY. |

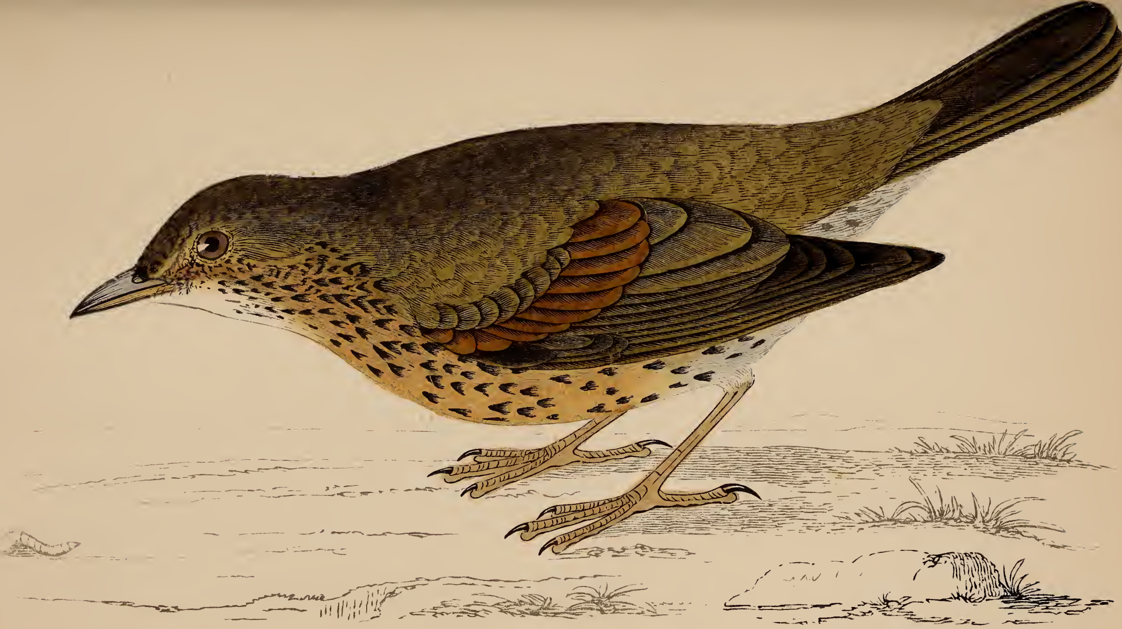
*Turdus*—A Thrush. *Musicus*—Musical.

THIS favourite bird is a native of Europe generally, being common, during summer, in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Russia, from whence it extends over Germany, France, Italy, and Greece. In Asia Minor it is also to be seen.

It is dispersed over the whole of our islands—in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Hebrides, the Orkneys, and Shetland, frequenting a variety of situations—the wood and the garden, the thicket and the meadow, the shrubbery and the lawn, the plantation and the cliff. The beautiful song of the Thrush may be continually heard, even in the parks in London, and in Kensington Gardens.

It remains with us throughout the year, but in the winter many additions to the numbers of our native birds are made from the northern parts of Europe, from whence they are driven by the inclemency of the climate. A north-east wind is their 'favouring gale,' and having recruited their strength for some days after their arrival, they move still farther southwards in our island.

The Thrush is lively and sprightly in all its actions, neat in its shape, harmless in its habits, pretty, though plain, in its plumage, and familiar in its disposition. It is not, strictly speaking, gregarious, though not a few are frequently seen together. The author of the 'Journal of a Naturalist,' Mr. Knapp, gives the following interesting account of a pair of these birds:—'We observed this summer two Common Thrushes



THRUSH.

frequenting the shrubs on the green in our garden. From the slenderness of their forms, and the freshness of their plumage, we pronounced them to be birds of the preceding summer. There was an association and friendship between them that called our attention to their actions. One of them seemed ailing, or feeble from some bodily accident; for though it hopped about, yet it appeared unable to obtain sufficiency of food. Its companion, an active sprightly bird, would frequently bring it worms or snails, when they mutually partook of the banquet; and the ailing bird would wait patiently, understand the actions, expect the assistance of the other, and advance from its asylum upon its approach. This procedure was witnessed some days; but after a time we missed the fostered bird, which probably died, or by reason of its weakness, met with some fatal accident.'

The Thrush is a tameable bird, and, if encouraged, in hard weather will come close to the window for food. He is, however, not deficient in cunning, and will often baffle a pursuer by lying close in the bottom of a hedge, until the danger has past, when he will fly off in the opposite direction, with a loud chattering noise. Thrushes are good birds to eat, and are often sold in the markets with their kindred species. They have not unfrequently been known to take refuge in houses when pursued by Hawks.

Their flight, which is capable of being prolonged to a great distance, is rapid, performed in moderate curves, with quick flaps, intermitted at intervals, often at considerable elevation, but generally rather low. On the ground, in quest of food, they droop the wings a little, and with the tail nearly horizontal, raise the head askance; if any thing in the shape of food is descried, they move quickly to it, their general mode of progression being by a series of leaps. If in a listless mood, the tail and wings are drooped, the neck drawn in, and the feathers ruffled out: in this attitude they may often be seen perched on a stone, or branch of a tree or hedge. They settle very suddenly.

Their food consists of snails, insects, worms, caterpillars, and fruits; and in the winter berries and seeds of different kinds contribute to their sustenance. The former they break the hard shells of by hammering them with their bills against some accustomed stone, as on a Druidical cromlech, deriving, they do, their origin from the ancient British times, before the treacherous Saxons or the Norman adventurers had touched the soil.

As for the note, that man can have no music in his soul who does not love the song of the Throstle. Who would not stand still to listen to it in the tranquil summer evening, and look for the place of the vocalist? Presently you will discover the delightful bird pouring forth his lay from the top of some neighbouring tree; you will see his throat swelling with his love song, and hear it you may, if you choose to linger, till sable night casts her dark mantle on all around, and wraps the face of nature in the shroud. Begun with the dawn of day, the Mavis has continued his clear and liquid notes at intervals till now that evening has come, when he must sing his evening hymn, and remind you of your own orisions to the Great Creator. The calm eventide is the hour at which he most delights to sing, and rich and eloquent then, as always, are his strains. Uninterruptedly he warbles the mellifluous and harmonious sounds, which now rise in strength, and now fall in measured cadences, filling your ear with the ravishing melody, and now die away so soft and low, that they are scarcely audible. If you alarm him, you break the charm; he will suddenly cease, and silently drop into the underwood beneath.

Each modulation consists of four or five syllables, each repeated from three or four to seven times, and then changed for another movement. They are uttered more slowly or more rapidly at different times, and the tones are sometimes so varied, that they might be supposed to proceed from different birds, at different distances from the listener. Meyer also mentions that he has heard the chant of the Nightingale successfully imitated. Two birds at a distance will often answer to each other in 'Strophé' and 'Antistrophé,' the one beginning when the other ceases; and several may often be heard singing together in concert at one and the same time.

The Thrush begins to sing in the very earliest part of the year, even in January or February, according to the season, and has been heard so soon as the third of the former month: even the heaviest rain does not stop its lay. Those to whose ears the voice of the Throstle is familiar, and before whose minds the recollection of their school days brings the name 'Ludovique Desprez,' will be able to appreciate the suggestion of a similitude of that date between the sweet note of the bird and the liquid name of the editor of the Delphin edition of Horace. A somewhat similar classical likeness has been recorded in the reference to the note of the Blue Titmouse, and the 'Pleasures of Memory' will at all events, I feel assured, be allowed to plead in excuse of the comparison, even if the resemblance be not so striking to all minds as it is to mine, and I doubt not is also to those of some of my old schoolfellows.

The Thrush begins to sing so early as from one to two o'clock in the long midsummer mornings. It may be taught to whistle many tunes and waltzes with great precision. It sometimes sings while sitting on the nest. When perched upon a tree, whether it be a high or a low one, it is almost always at or near the top that the strain is uttered.

Nidification commences the latter end of March, and the eggs are deposited earlier or later in April, though sometimes not until May, according to the season. Nests have been known to have been begun even so early as the middle of February, but frost caused them to be deserted. They are correspondingly able to fly from the latter end of April to the middle of June, and have been known to have been hatched even on the last day of March. A second brood is generally reared in the season, and if one set of eggs is destroyed, a second is produced in a fortnight, or even a third if need be. The female is extremely attentive to her charge, and will sit on the nest until quite closely approached, and will sometimes suffer herself to be taken sooner than forsake it. If you disturb and alarm her, she will testify her anxiety by flying round you with ruffled feathers and outspread tail, uttering a note of alarm, and violently snapping the bill. If unmolested, both birds have been known to pick up crumbs of bread thrown down to them, and to give them to their young.

Mr. Macgillivray had a male Thrush, which when only six weeks old, brought up a brood of half-fledged Larks; and also fed a young Cuckoo with the most tender care and anxiety. The Thrush was however repaid with the most base ingratitude by his thankless protegé, for after he had taught it to feed itself, it repeatedly attacked its benefactor, and would scarcely even allow him to partake of the least atom of food. Another, also a young bird, kept in a cage with a young Blackbird by a gentleman in the city of Norwich, having soon learned to feed itself, undertook the care of its companion, which it fed perseveringly for ten days, until at the expiration of that period it too was able to feed itself, which before it was not. If the eggs of another kindred species should be placed in the nest of a Thrush, both will be educated together without distinction—'nullo discrimine.'

The nest is composed of moss, small twigs, straws, leaves, roots, stems of plants, and grass, compacted together with some tenacious substance with tolerable ingenuity, and is lined with a congeries of clay and decayed wood. Its diameter is usually about three inches and a half or four inches inside, and about seven outside; its depth from two and a half to four. It is placed in a hedge or thick bush of any kind at a small height from the ground, and likewise at times on a rough bank among moss, brambles, or shrubs, as also, where the country is unwooded, under the shelter of some projecting stone or crag, in the crevice of a rock, or in a tuft of heath. One has been known to be placed on a rail, and one on the shaft of a thrashing machine: they are not unfrequently found in a shed or open tool-house. These birds are sometimes very expeditious in erecting their nests.—'Thus,' says Mr. Macgillivray, 'on Thursday morning, the 15th. of June, 1837, a pair began to build in an apple-tree in my garden. On Friday afternoon the nest was finished, and on Saturday morning, the 17th., the first egg was laid in it, although the plaster in the inside was very wet. On Wednesday, the 21st., the female began to sit on five eggs, and on Monday, the 17th. of July, the young ones flew out of their nest.'

The late amiable Dr. Stanley, Bishop of Norwich, whom I have so frequently had the pleasure of quoting from, gives the following account as an instance of the confidence which the Thrush, if undisturbed, will exhibit in building its own habitation close to that of man:—A short time ago, in Scotland, some carpenters working in a shed adjacent to a house, observed one of these birds flying in and out, which induced them to direct their attention to the cause, when, to their surprise, they found a nest commenced among the teeth of a harrow, which, with some other farming-tools and implements, were placed upon the joists of the shed just over their heads. The carpenters had arrived soon after six o'clock; and at seven, when they found the nest, it was in a state of great forwardness, and had evidently been the morning's work of a pair of these indefatigable birds. Their activity throughout the day was incessant, and when the workmen left off in the evening, and came again in the morning, they found the female seated on her half-finished mansion; and, when she flew off for a short time, it was found that she had already laid an egg, though the bottom of the nest was the only part plastered and completed. When all was finished the male bird took his share in the hatching, and though he did not sit so long, he was very attentive in feeding her when on the nest: the young were hatched in thirteen days. As they grew, and required greater supplies, the entrance and retreat of the old ones through the door was so rapid that it could scarcely be seen, but was only known by the sound as they darted over the heads of the men—another proof of the rapidity of flight of even the slower flying birds, when urged by necessity.

Very early in the spring odd eggs are sometimes found here and there; and one has been known placed on a branch of a tree supported only by a very small portion of moss. It frequently is the case that the nest is very conspicuous for a time, from being placed among the branches of some deciduous shrub, whose anticipated leaves have either been too soon calculated on by the bird, or have been kept back by some fortuitous change of weather. It is very light in weight, and it is curious how it, and the same applies to the nests of other birds, retains its place when even the strongest trees are overthrown by some tremendous gale.

Mr. John H. Blundell, of Luton, Bedfordshire, informs me that he has found the nest of a Thrush in the side of a round wheat stack.

The eggs, usually four or five in number, are of a beautiful clear greenish blue colour, with more or fewer distinct black spots and dots, principally over the larger end. The youngest of my three boys, Marmaduke Charles Frederick Morris, has one entirely plain, with the exception of a single dot. They vary considerably in size: some are very small.

Male; length, from about eight inches and a half to nine inches and a quarter. The bill is rather large in proportion to the size of the bird—along the base of the upper mandible, which is of a blackish brown colour, are a few bristly feathers; the lower mandible is pale dusky yellowish red. Iris, rich dark chesnut brown; a dark streak runs from the bill to it, and over it, running from the base of the bill, is a faint greyish yellow streak; eyelids, grey. Head on the crown, brownish olive, with a tinge of reddish brown; neck in front, and on the sides, from the head, pale reddish yellow, each feather terminated by a triangular-shaped brownish black spot; neck on the back, and nape, brownish olive; chin, white; throat, yellowish white. Breast, nearly white. or yellowish white, above with spots, below without; on the sides it is more or less tinged with pale reddish and olive. Back, brownish olive, with a tinge of yellowish grey.

The wings, when closed, reach to near the middle of the tail; they extend in width from one foot one inch to one foot two inches and three quarters; greater wing coverts, brown, and lighter brown with dull buff tips; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, deep brown, their outer webs reddish brown, the inner webs tinged with buff or light reddish yellow, and the latter-named tipped with pale buff. The first quill feather is very short and slender, the second nearly as long as the fifth, the third and fourth nearly equal in length, and longer than the second, the third the longest in the wing; larger and lesser under wing coverts, buff or light reddish yellow. The tail is rather narrow, and rounded at the end. Its colour is brownish olive, the inner webs of the feathers darker—underneath, it is reddish brown; under tail coverts, white or yellowish white, streaked with brown. Legs and toes, pale yellowish grey, underneath darker and tinged with yellow, the heel dull yellow; claws, brown.

The female is generally rather smaller than the male. Length, from eight inches to eight and a half. The neck in front and on the sides is of a paler yellow, and the spots also are not so dark. The wings extend from one foot to one foot one inch or over.

In the young, when fledged, the whole plumage is less compact, and the bill is paler coloured than in the adult bird. The inside of the mouth is orange, and at the corners of the bill yellow; iris, brownish black. Head on the sides, and on the crown, brownish olive, tinged with reddish brown, each feather with a slight central streak of yellow. Neck, brighter in front in the yellow, and the spots darker than in the male—the yellow fades with age; chin, darker than in the mature bird. Back above, brownish olive, the feathers lighter in their centre; on its lower part olive brown, tinged with grey. Greater wing coverts, brown, mottled with reddish brown; lesser wing coverts, brown, much streaked and tipped with pale brown; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dusky, the outer webs of the quills generally tinged with yellowish. Toes, pale yellowish red, tinged in front with blue, and beneath yellow; the heel yellow.

After the first autumnal moult the plumage is complete.

Individuals of this species vary, as will appear, very considerably in size. In the autumn the feathers have become more or less ragged and worn, and all the colours have faded considerably, the brown into grey, and the yellow into greyish white.

Mr. Bix, of Bongate, writes me word of white Thrushes found two successive years in that neighbourhood, the one nest being within forty yards of the preceding one. The former contained four young, two of them white with red eyes, and the other two of the common colour. The latter had also four young, one of them white, and three of the proper colour; the eyes of the latter, which was kept alive, became afterwards darker; so also Dr. Henry Moses, of Appleby, Westmoreland, tells me that last year a Thrush's nest was found in that neighbourhood with three cream-coloured and two usual-coloured young ones, and that this year five were found in a nest all cream-coloured: in one which was taken and kept alive the eyes were scarlet.

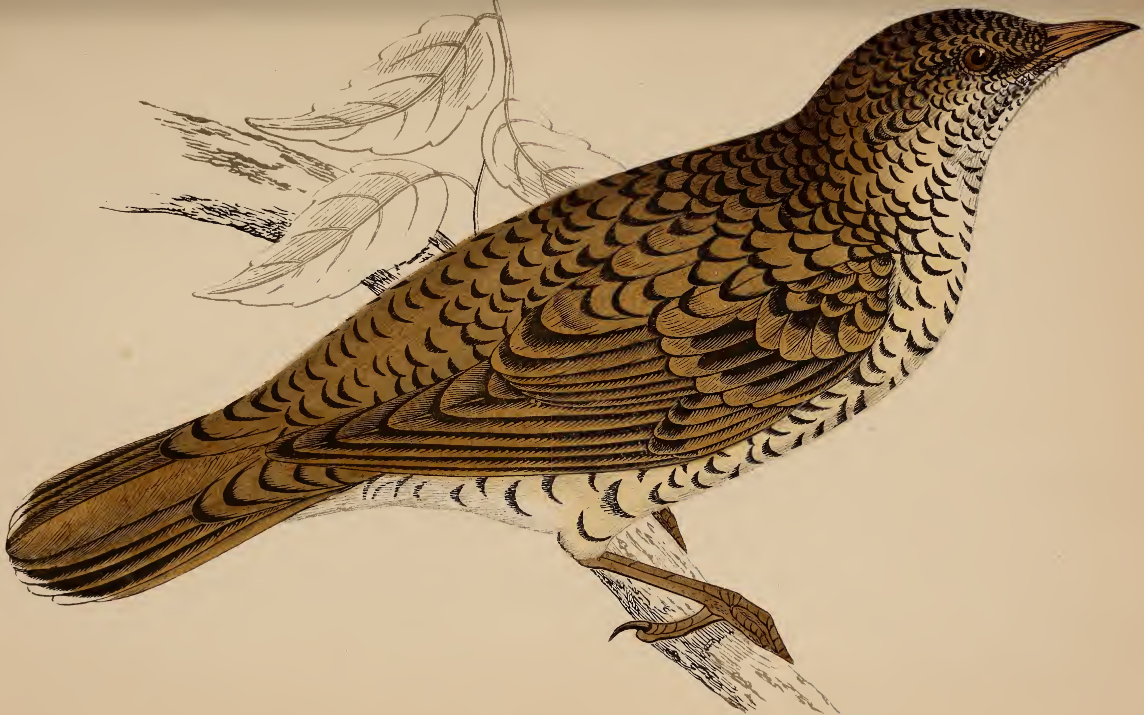
J. W. Lukis, Esq. has forwarded me a curious variety of the young of this species, which is all over of a light yellowish brown colour, the breast shewing incipient marks of the usual spots. There was another of the same colour in the nest, one of which was left with its parents, which were of the ordinary colour, and was brought up by them; the other, the one in question, was kept alive for a month with care. Another, an old bird, was observed at the same time, and the same place, Heacham Hall, near Lynn, Norfolk, with white feathers in its tail.

# WHITE'S THRUSH.

*Turdus Whitei,* EYTON. GOULD. YARRELL.

*Turdus*—A Thrush. *Whitei*—Of White.

A SPECIMEN of this bird was shot by Lord Malmesbury at Herons Court, his seat near Christchurch, Hampshire, on the 24th. of January, 1828. Another is said to have been killed in the New Forest in the same county, by one of the Forest keepers, but in the absence of names or dates nothing conclusive can be said about it. Closely allied species are natives of remote Japan and Java, and two specimens of the former are related to have been obtained in Europe, on the banks of the Elbe, but as Mr. Yarrell says that the wing of one of them is longer than in the Japanese bird, it may belong to a distinct species. Mr. Yarrell further remarks that one of the two European ones, and one from Japan, appear to be identical with Lord Malmesbury's specimen, and that another from Australia seems to agree with that said to have been procured in the New Forest. If however 'facts are stubborn things' so are measurements; for not to lay stress on the difference between the respective lengths of each individual bird referred to, only two of which, the Australian and the Japanese one, are alike in this respect, the others being more or less widely different from these and from each other, measuring severally twelve inches and a half, twelve inches, eleven inches and a half, and ten inches and three quarters in length, the comparative anatomy, so to call it, of each, is also dissimilar: thus, in Lord Malmesbury's specimen, the second and fourth quill feathers are of equal length, and in the Japanese bird the third and fourth, in the one from Java the second and sixth are equal, in that from Australia the third, fourth, and fifth, are nearly equal, and in the one said to have been met with in the New Forest the third and fifth are equal. Mr. Gould also observes that



WHITE'S THRUSH.

the bill in the European specimen is not so large as in the Asiatic ones. I cannot therefore speak with any degree of certainty as to the specific identity or dissimilarity of these different individuals, but all that I can suggest is that they may belong to two or more different, but closely allied species; the outward appearance of each one is very much, I believe, that of the others.

The following is the description from Yarrell of the British specimen, which, as having been procured in Hampshire, was named after the Rev. Gilbert White, of Selborne, by T. C. Eyton, Esq., of Eyton, Shropshire:—Length, one foot and half an inch; bill, dark brown, except the base of the under mandible, which is pale yellow brown: the space between the bill and the eye is pale brown, and from the lower edge of the under mandible descends a narrow dark streak. Iris, hazel; head on the back, yellow brown, the feathers tipped with black; neck in the front, white, the feathers tipped with crescent-shaped black spots; nape, yellow brown, the feathers tipped with black. Chin and throat, white; breast, white, with a tinge of yellowish brown, all the feathers tipped with a black crescent; back, yellow brown, darker than on the head, the feathers tipped in the form of a crescent with black, the shaft of each feather yellow.

The wings are rather short, and do not reach far over the tail; greater wing coverts, dark brown with light yellow brown ends, forming together two oblique cross bars; lesser wing coverts, also brown, with broad pale yellow ends, the side webs black, the shafts yellow brown. Primaries, pale brown on the outer web, brownish black on the inner web with dark brown ends, the shafts black; the first quill feather is very short, the second a little longer than the fifth, the third and fourth equal and the longest in the wing; secondaries and tertiaries, pale brown on the outer web, brownish black on the inner web, with dark brown ends, the shafts black; lesser under wing coverts, white at the base, and black at the tip. The tail has the four middle feathers uniform pale brown, the others darker in the webs, but lighter at the ends, and of these the outer ones are the lightest; underneath, it is greyish brown, the shafts of the feathers white; upper tail coverts, yellow brown, darker than on the head, the feathers tipped in the form of a crescent with black, the shaft of each feather yellow; under tail coverts, white. Legs and toes, pale brown; the claws rather lighter.

# GOLD-VENTED THRUSH.

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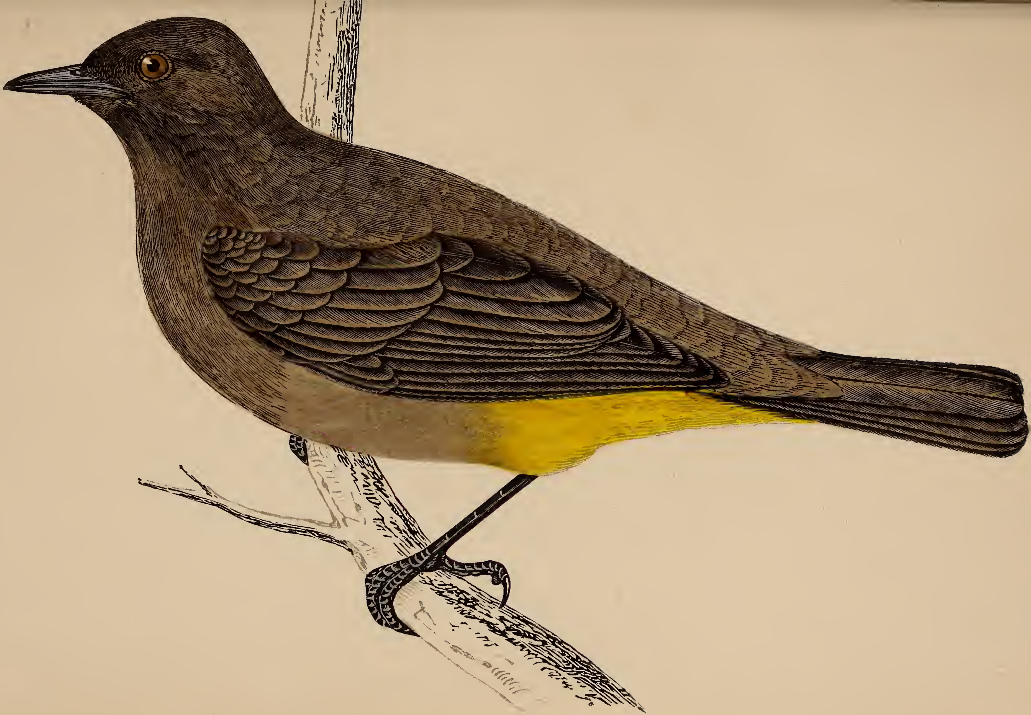
| *Turdus aurigaster,* | VIELLOT. |
| *Turdus chrysorhœus,* | TEMMINCK. LESSON. |
| *Hœmatornis chrysorhœus,* | SWAINSON. |
| *Pycnonotus chrysorhœus,* | THOMPSON. |

*Turdus*—A Thrush. *Aurigaster. Aurum*—Gold. *Gastēr*—The belly.

THIS is an African species, and as such was described by the celebrated Le Vaillant, whose entertaining travels are so well known. As far as appears, it may be rare even in its native country, for only a pair were seen, one of which, the male, was shot by Le Vaillant's companion, Klaas, on the banks of the Grootvis River, in Kaffirland; but the other, the female, escaped, his gun being only a single-barrelled one; and though they searched the district for several days, they saw no others, nor even the female again. In all probability, however, the bird may be common in some one or more parts of that vast continent.

The only other specimen of the Gold-vented Thrush that seems to be on record was shot at Mount Beresford, in the county and near the town of Waterford, in Ireland, in the month of January, 1838, by a boy who was shooting Blackbirds, and by whom it was supposed to be one of those birds. Both the season and the locality must alike have been strange to it, for, as was Rizzio's, its 'home is far away,' and on what errand, and through what combination of circumstances it came hither, is beyond the hazard even of a conjecture.

Male; length, seven inches and a half; bill, black. A rudimentary crest is formed by the feathers of the head when raised, they being slightly elongated. Head on the crown, and neck on the back, and nape, brown. Throat and neck in front, brown, becoming lighter on the breast, which fades



GOLD-VENTED THRUSH.

below into dull white. Back, brown, not so dark as the head. The wings have the first quill feather very short, only an inch in length, the second three quarters of an inch longer than the first, but shorter than the third, the fourth the longest in the wing. The tail is slightly forked; under tail coverts, brilliant yellow. Legs, toes, and claws, black.

This description is taken from Mr. Yarrell's, who had the specimen lent to him by Dr. Burkitt, of Waterford, into whose possession it had come.

# ROCK THRUSH.

*Turdus saxatilis*, TEMMINCK.
*Petrocincla saxatilis*, VIGORS.

*Turdus*—A Thrush. *Saxatilis*—Pertaining to Rocks.
*Saxum*—A Rock.

THIS bird is a native of Europe, Asia, and Africa, frequenting the most desolate parts of mountainous and rocky districts, where culture is next to impossible, and comparative security is therefore gained. The wild fastnesses of the great chain of the Uralian Mountains, the precipices of the snow-clad Alps, the gorges of the Pyrenees, and other kindred places, give it a home and an abiding place in Germany, France, and Switzerland, Spain, and the Tyrol, Italy, Turkey, Sicily, and the islands of the Grecian seas.

Our only specimen—'vix ea nostro voco,'—was shot on the 19th. of May, 1843, by Mr. Joseph Trigg, at Therfield, near Royston, in the county of Hertford. Mr. Yarrell was the first to give a figure of it as a British species. Another individual is also mentioned by him, as having been said to have been killed by a gamekeeper, but neither date nor locality is recorded.

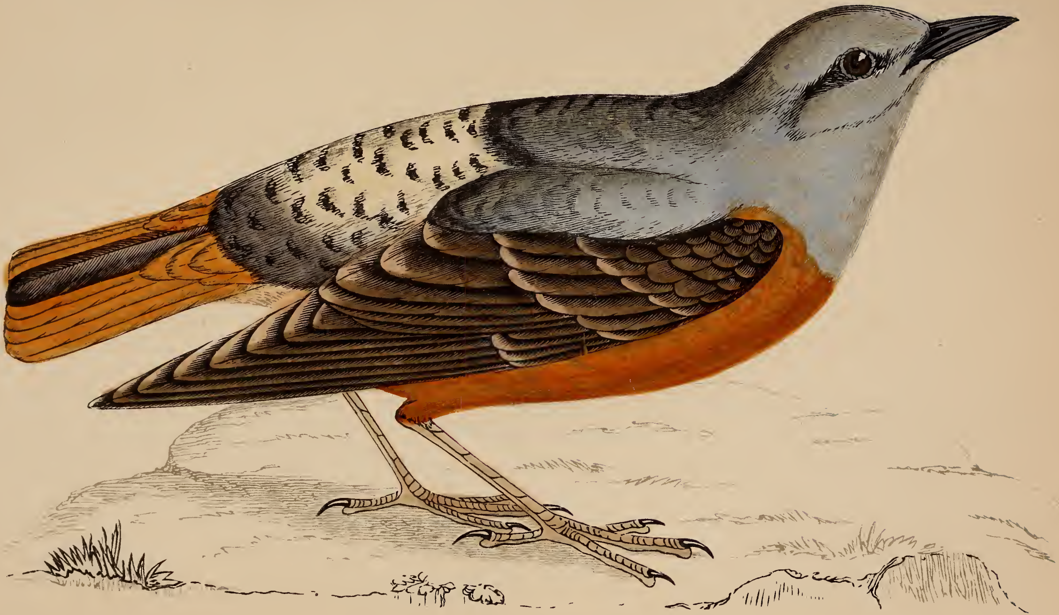
It migrates in the colder season of the year from the more northern to the more southern of the countries mentioned above.

It is a very shy bird, but nevertheless is capable of being kept in confinement.

Its food consists of insects and berries of various kinds.

The Rock Thrush is an excellent songster, and has been known to sing at night if a candle was brought into the room in which the cage was placed.

The nest is said to be made of moss. It is placed in crevices of rocks, whether those which have fallen down from



ROCK THRUSH.

their primeval resting-place, or those that still abide in the place of their hoar antiquity.

The eggs are described as being four, or thereabouts in number, and of a greenish blue colour, without spots.

Male; length, seven inches and a half; bill, black; iris, dark brown. Head, crown, and neck all round, and nape, bluish grey; chin, throat, and breast, light chesnut brown. Back, on the upper part, bluish grey, passing into brown on the shoulders; on the remainder principally white, with a few bluish feathers. Greater wing coverts, dark brown, almost blackish, tipped with white; lesser wing coverts, also dark brown, nearly blackish brown. Tail, chesnut brown, the two central feathers rather darker than the others; upper tail coverts, dark brown; under tail coverts, light chesnut brown. Legs and toes, dark reddish brown.

Female; head and crown, dull brown; neck on the back, dull brown, on the sides pure white; nape, dull brown; some of all these brown feathers are occasionally varied with ash-coloured brown. Chin, throat, and breast, reddish white, with five transverse lines at the end of each feather; back, brown, with some large white spots. Tail, light chesnut brown, the two middle feathers ash-coloured brown.

Young; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, light ash-coloured brown, each feather terminated with a spot of greyish white. Chin, throat, and breast, reddish white, much varied with the latter colour, which is again intersected with brown lines. Back, light ash-coloured brown, the feathers terminated with a spot of greyish white. Greater and lesser wing coverts, edged with grey and tipped with white; primaries and secondaries, tipped with white. Tail, red, tipped with white.

For a description of this bird I am indebted to Mr. Yarrell's work.

# BLACKBIRD.

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| *Turdus merula,* | PENNANT. MONTAGU. |
| *Merula vulgaris,* | SELBY. GOULD. |

*Turdus*—A Thrush. *Merula*—A Blackbird.

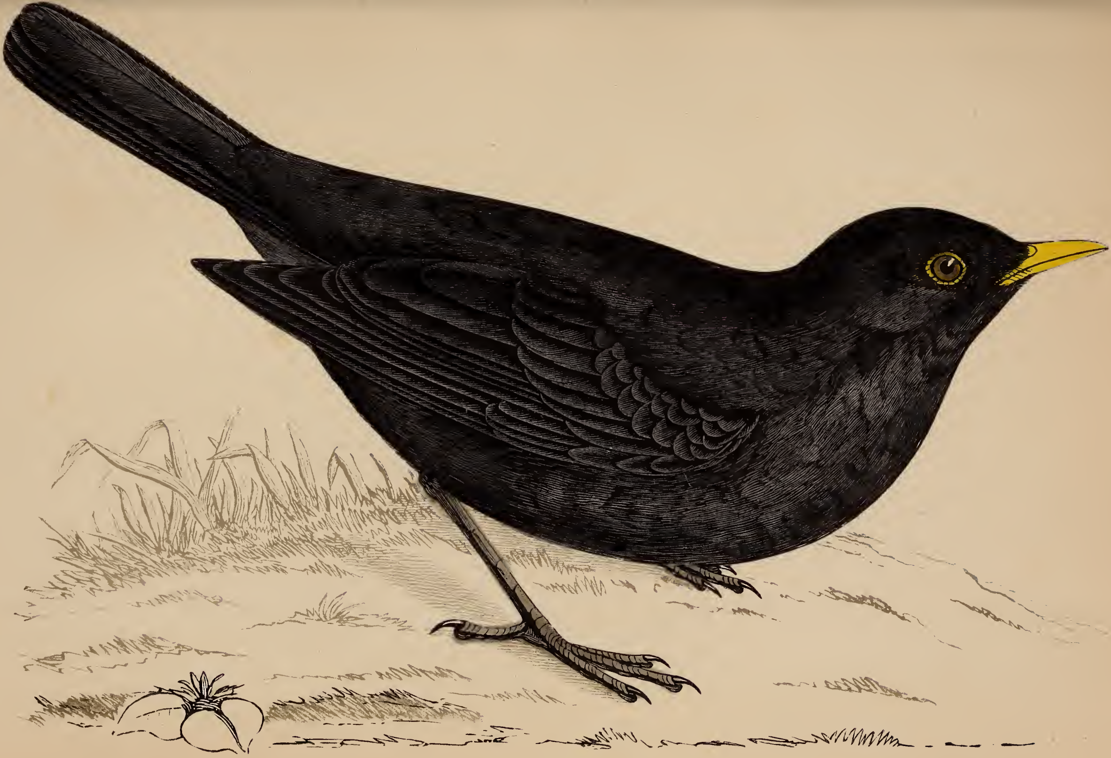
THOUGH sober and unpretending in plumage, yet, as thoroughly associated with every sylvan scene, the Blackbird must always be, as doubtless he always has been, one of our most favourite birds. When the ground is covered with snow, that of the day as white, as Aristotle says, as that which has lain congealed for a thousand years, then is our bird seen to the greatest advantage, a sable beauty indeed, black as ebony itself, the dazzling white contrasting well with his dark garb, and each in turn setting off and heightening the appearance of the other.

From the northern parts of Europe—Sweden and Norway, its range extends over the whole of the European continent, through Germany, where it remains throughout the year, and Greece, Switzerland, and France, to the north of Africa, and thence to the Azores. In Asia it is also common—in Syria and other parts.

It is found in greater or less plenty in all parts of England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, the Hebrides, the Orkneys, and Shetland. In the Orkneys it breeds, but not in great numbers, being the most abundant there in winter. In the Hebrides, and any particularly barren districts of the north, it is said not to breed.

It frequents gardens, both walled and others, groves and shrubberies, hedgerows and copses, moist places in woods, marshy grounds, tangled brakes, the sides of walls, and the margins of streams, especially if bordered by wood, in more or less abundance.

It is with us a permanent resident, affecting the more



BLACKBIRD.

cultivated in preference to the more wild parts of the country, and in winter it draws nearer to the neighbourhood of houses and towns, according to the state of the weather, but generally keeps beneath the sheltering protection of trees, hedges, or bushes, among which it hops with singular celerity if pursued, its presence being often only known on hearing its note of alarm.

About the beginning of November, very large flocks arrive on the north-eastern coasts from more northern countries, and, after recruiting their strength for a few days, wing their way to the south and west.

In its habits it is restless, shy, and vigilant, and if alarmed or disturbed, either lies close till the danger is past, or suddenly takes wing with a vociferous chattering cry; if in the breeding-season, its partner soon shares its flight. It is most seen in the morning and evening, following its avocations in a more retired manner in the middle of the day. It is rather of a pugnacious disposition, and especially jealous in the spring of the approach of others to the spot selected for its nest. It is easily kept in confinement, but is fond of attacking and teasing its companions, if placed in an aviary in company with other birds. The male and female are frequently seen together in winter, it is believed that, at all events in many instances, they pair for life; the members of the family do not keep together long after the young are able to fly, and though three or four Blackbirds may often be seen near together for a short time in the same locality, it is a mere community of object, and none of natural feeling, that has brought them into neighbourhood; neither do they consort with other species. They are very good birds to eat.

A very young Blackbird, says Mr. Jesse, was put into a cage which was hung up under the porch of a lodge: after the bird had become reconciled to its confinement, and had begun to feed, an older Blackbird was caught and put into the same cage. This old bird moped, and refused to feed itself, and would probably have died, had not the younger brought it food in its bill, and in every respect treated it as if it had been its mother, nourishing it with the greatest perseverance for some time. Again, a cat was observed on the top of a paled fence, endeavouring to get at a Blackbird's nest which was near it; the hen left the nest on her approach, flew to meet her in a state of great alarm, and placed herself almost within her reach, uttering the most piteous screams of wildness and despair. The cock bird, on perceiving the danger, shewed the greatest distress, and uttered loud screams and outcries, sometimes settling on the fence just before the cat, who was unable to make a spring, in consequence of the narrowness of its footing. After a little time, the cock bird flew at the cat, settled on her back, and pecked her head with such violence that she fell to the ground, followed by the Blackbird, who succeeded in driving her away. A second time the same scene occurred; the Blackbird was again victorious, and the cat became so intimidated at the attacks made upon her, that she gave over her attempts to get at the young ones. After each battle the Blackbird celebrated his victory with a song, and for several days afterwards he would hunt the cat about the garden whenever she left the house. He adds that he also knew an instance of a pair of Blackbirds following a boy into a house, and pecking at his head while he was conveying one of their young into it. He very properly observes that people little think what misery they occasion to birds when they deprive them of the brood which they have been cherishing with so much tenderness and affection. 'The cruel parent,' says an old author, 'that would encourage his childe to deprive a poor birde of her own broode, right well deserveth to have his own nest robbed, and to become childless.'

The following instance of the longevity of the Blackbird in confinement is recorded in the Belfast Commercial Chronicle of December 25th., 1839:—'A VENERABLE BLACKBIRD.—There is at present in the possession of Mr. John Spence, of Tullaghgarley, near Ballymena, a Blackbird, that has arrived at the wonderful age of twenty years and nearly eight months. It was taken by him from the nest when young, and ever since has enjoyed the very best of health. It still continues to sing, and that well. He is, however, beginning to shew symptoms of old age—his head is getting grey, and a number of white feathers are springing up on his neck and breast.'

Mr. Couch, in his interesting 'Illustrations of Instinct,' remarks how when the Blackbird flies off to a closer cover, it communicates an alarm to all its race, and from frequent repetition this sound becomes a signal of caution, which the young cannot fail to associate with the idea of danger, even when no object of terror is seen. 'My attention,' he says, 'was once attracted to the rapidly-repeated utterance of the scream of a Blackbird, and the twittering of many other individuals of the same species, which were directing their eyes towards a circumscribed spot in a thick bush, and on approaching to examine what could be the cause of so much clamour, the presence of a cat was discovered. The sly creature had evidently been endeavouring to escape observation, and was therefore not a little annoyed at being thus made the 'observed of all observers.' But the birds were determined that the whole neighbourhood should know of the presence of the intruder; instead of flying off they continued their vociferations, and peace was not restored till she had been compelled to retreat.'

Its flight is quick and hurried, hasty and precipitate, as if, for some reason or other, it were conscious that concealment suited it best; even if alarmed, it generally only flits along for a little distance, and then turns in again to its cover. If its flight be at all extended, it is even and steady, but its short flittings are, as just mentioned, fitful, undulated, and capricious, and in the season of incubation a series of starts, a single flap of the wings, and a consequent bound. When perched on a branch, it bends forward, raises or lowers its tail, now and then flaps its wings, then perhaps sings, and then flies to another tree or a wall, there to perform the like evolutions. Often, if it thinks that it shall be passed by without notice, it skulks about under cover, with the stealthy tread of a Blackfeet or Crow Indian, but the dry and fallen autumnal leaves betray the presence of the cautious bird, in the coppice or wood through which you pass, and the rustling sound of its footfall almost startles you in your lonely walk, perhaps many a mile yet from home, as you return from some out-lying village or distant solitary house. The wind sighs among the trees, a prelude to the storm of the dark night that is fast closing in around you, and the daylight is but scant, but if you look closely, you will catch the glance of a black eye, shy of observation, and wistfully expressing the desire of its owner to be left to itself.

In the spring, summer, and autumn, the Blackbird feeds on moths, beetles, and other insects and their larvæ, worms, snails, fruits, and seeds, such as cherries, currants, blackberries, gooseberries, peas, and pears, the place of the latter being supplied in winter by wheat, oats, and other grain and seeds, and the berries of the hawthorn, the mountain ash, the holly, and others. It sometimes does some damage by pulling up plants, in search of insects. The shells of snails it breaks against any hard spot, in the same way that the Thrush does. In the autumn it frequents turnip-fields in search of insect food. Doubtless, as in so many other similar cases of supposed injury, the evil that it may do is counterbalanced by a proportionate amount of good. It begins its pilfering as soon as it is light, and has a habit when searching for food, of frequently raising and depressing the tail, expanding at the same time the tail feathers: it hops or leaps very quickly along. It swallows a little gravel at times to aid the digestion of its food. It is a hardy species, and is able to bear the severity of most of our winters, but hard weather compels many from their comparative retirement to the farm-yard, and sometimes they will approach quite close to the house, to feed on berries growing against the wall, and to pick up any crumbs placed there for them; one has been known to eat out of the hand while sitting on the nest.

The following account is given by Mr. Weir to Mr. Macgillivray, respecting the number of times in the day which he watched a pair of Blackbirds feed their young, four in number. At a quarter past three in the morning they commenced; from that time until four o'clock, the male fed them only once, and sang almost incessantly, whilst the female fed them six times; from four to five o'clock, the male fed them six times, and the female three times; from five to six o'clock, the male fed them four and the female five times; from six to seven o'clock, the male fed them three, and the female five times; and from seven to eight o'clock, the male fed them three times. For the last four hours he sang most delightfully, except when he was feeding the young birds, and as he had induced one of them to fly out after him, Mr. Weir had to replace it in the nest, which caused some interruption to their feeding. From eight to nine o'clock, the male fed them six, and the female seven times; and from nine to ten o'clock, the male fed them four, and the female three times; from ten to eleven o'clock, the male fed them three, and the female two times; from eleven to twelve o'clock, the male fed them two, and the female three times; from twelve to one o'clock, the male fed them two, and the female four times; and from one to two o'clock, the male fed them twice, and the female thrice. From two to three o'clock, the female fed them twice; and from three to four o'clock, the male fed them three, and the female four times. From four to five o'clock, the male fed them three, and the female four times; from five to six o'clock, the female fed them only twice; and from six to seven o'clock, she fed them three times. In the evening the male was almost entirely engaged in singing, and from seven to eight o'clock, fed them only once, and the female six times; and from eight to twenty minutes before nine o'clock, when they both ceased from their labours, the male fed them once, and the female seven times: the male still continued singing. Thus in the course of a single day, the male fed the young forty-four times, and the female sixty-nine times.

While engaged in watching, from his place of concealment, this pair of birds, Mr. Weir observed that before they fed their young, they always alighted upon a tree, and looked around them for a few seconds. Sometimes they brought sufficient food for the whole of their brood one by one, and at other times only enough for a single nestling. The young birds often trimmed their feathers, and stretched out their wings.

On a Wren accidentally coming so near as to detect the ambush, and giving a consequent note of alarm, all the birds in the neighbourhood flocked around at once, to endeavour to discover the cause of it, and the Blackbirds hopped round and round, and made every effort to penetrate the mystery, but at length gave up the attempt. One of the young birds having had the misfortune to be choked, the hen bird, on discovering the danger, set up a moan of distress. Her partner on hearing it instantly came to her assistance, and both made several attempts to dislodge the incubus, but for a time they were unsuccessful. At last the male bird most scientifically aided the process of deglutition, though only just in time, for the young one was so much exhausted, that it remained nearly three hours without moving, and with its eyes shut. The cock bird having alighted on a tree a few yards from the nest, poured forth a volume of song expressive of joy at the happy result of his endeavours.

With the note of alarm, Mr. Weir adds, which any set up on the discovery of their enemies, all the different species of the little birds seem to be most instinctively acquainted, for no sooner did a beast or a bird of prey make its appearance, than they seemed to be anxiously concerned about the safety of their family. From tree to tree they usually hopped, uttering their doleful lamentations. At one time the Blackbirds were in an unusual state of excitement and terror—a prowling weasel having made its appearance; and while the danger threatened, the young birds, on the parents announcing it, cowered down in the nest, and appeared to be in great uneasiness.

With regard to the song of the Blackbird, it has long been my opinion that he is neither more nor less than a mocking-bird, and that all his best notes are borrowed from those of the Thrush, to which, as is the case with most imitations of an original, they are much inferior; they are more remarkable for power, and in some degree for tone, than for compass or variety. One curious instance is on record of its having been heard, even in the wild state, crowing like a Cock, occasionally indulging for a moment or two in its natural song; another is related to have effected a similar imitation: when the Cocks in the neighbouring farm-yard answered his supposed challenge, he seemed delighted, and even flapped his wings when he crowed, and thus went on with the mimic rivalry. Two other similar instances are related by Mr. Thompson, of Belfast, as having occurred in Ireland; one in the shrubbery of Mr. Boxwell, of Lyngestown, in the county of Wexford, and the other at Oakland, Broughshane, in the county of Antrim; the latter was only heard to crow early in the summer.

The following anecdote of this bird was communicated to Mr. Thompson by Edward Benn, Esq.:—'A man wishing to have some of his breed, robbed the nest, which contained four young; two he left, and the other two he put into a large cage, and removed to his house. The old cock came constantly with food for the young in the cage, going into it and feeding them; the man, watching for such an opportunity, made a run at the cage, and secured him, but when carrying it into the house, the bird made his escape through a hole in the wires. It was supposed he would not come back: he, however, returned to feed the young as usual; but instead of going into the cage, he went to the outside, and put the food through the wires. It may have been instinct that prompted him to find food for his young, though removed to a distance, and in an unusual place; but when he found there was danger in feeding them in the old way, it certainly shewed calculation to find out a way of doing it equally well without running risk. It was also very curious to see him going to feed the young when any person was watching:

—the cage was in a potatoe-garden, and he would fly to the low end of the garden and creep up the furrow, so that it was impossible to see him until he had finished his duty, when he flew off with great noise. The hen never appeared, and it was supposed she had been killed. To all that is here stated I was a witness.'

A chatter, somewhat resembling that of the Magpie, is frequently uttered, especially in the spring season, the wings being fluttered and the body bent forward at the same time, as if overbalanced; an advance is made, and the posture and the note repeated, particularly if the bird be alarmed or excited: he has also a 'chink, chink.' One has successfully imitated the song of the Nightingale: another the cawing of a Crow; and another attempted the chuckling of a Hen. One, which was kept tame in a house without being confined in a cage, has been known, when irritated, not only to peck with its bill, but to rise and strike with its claws, after the manner of a Cock. The Blackbird frequently scares away with loud cries, or at least endeavours to do so, any supposed enemy, even from the nests of other birds: 'proximus ardet Ucalagon,' and he fears that his own turn may be the next.

Edward D. Swarbreck, Esq., of Thirsk, writes me word that he has heard it sing on the morning of the 21st. of this last December, though the 'shortest day,' 1852. Such is the case at times in all the winter months, especially in calm and mild weather, whether clear or cloudy. The spring is his best 'season' as a vocalist,. and his voice is heard from the middle of February till the moulting-time in the autumn, though much less often after the young are hatched. Mr. Macgillivray heard one sing, though indistinctly, on the 18th. of October. In general it ceases about the middle or end of July, or the beginning of August. It may be taught to whistle a variety of tunes, and to imitate the human voice. The ordinary note is a chattering cry, which it almost invariably utters when alarmed to take wing.

The Blackbird's warble is one that attracts attention, and you will see him perched on one of the top twigs of the tree, from whence he carols his glad notes. He begins his song in the middle of summer with the earliest dawn, and continues it at intervals throughout the day, even until the twilight and his own black plumage begin to fade together into night. His first morning ditty is but harsh and unmusical, but when the sun advances up towards the horizon, and the red rays of 'Fair Aurora' gild the sky, he hails the glorious sight with a louder and more joyous strain. In dull and cloudy and ungenial weather he is much later in commencing, and is, on the other hand, heard to the greatest advantage when some refreshing summer rain falls upon the thirsty earth, even though the thunder should utterly for the moment drown his voice, and while the lightning flashes its most vivid gleams. On the approach of danger the Blackbird utters, as do several other birds, a peculiar note, which, as indicative of alarm, is at once noticed by even an ordinary observer. In connexion with this subject may here be mentioned a curious occurrence related by Mr. Couch. A weasel, followed by its young ones in training, was seen in eager pursuit of a Blackbird on the wing, and though a very slight elevation in the direction of the flight of the bird would have carried it over a hedge and out of danger, yet so great was its terror, that it was unable to mount so high, and consequently soon became their prey.

This species pairs in February or March, but occasionally much earlier. Thus in the 'Yorkshire Gazette' of the 8th. of this present January, 1853, it is recorded that a nest with two eggs was found at Brompton, in this county, on the 3rd. instant, by D. Ferguson, Esq., of Redcar.

The nest is placed in a variety of situations, and is frequently found in a heap of sticks, even though placed in an outhouse, or most commonly in a bush; sometimes in a tree against a wall, or in a tree or wall covered with ivy; an instance has been known of its being placed on the stump of a tree, close to the ground, and Sir William Jardine found one on the ground, at the foot of a tree; another was also found in a similar situation, at the foot of a hazel bush, in a wood, by my friend the Rev. W. Waldo Cooper, of West Rasen, Lincolnshire: in the same wood he found another on the stump of a hazel which had been cut down, and from which several stems had grown; it was not raised an inch from the ground, but was quite surrounded by the new branches. Another found on the ground has been recorded in the 'Zoologist,' page 1023, by W. W. Spicer, Esq. Mr. John H. Blundell, of Luton, Bedfordshire, has written me word of his having found the nest in one instance on the ground, in the middle of a large plantation of oaks. It is often placed in a hedge, and is commonly built at a height of three or four feet, also in a hole in a wall or rock. In some instances it has been known, when placed in or against the branch of a tree, to be in some degree fastened to it by a twining and lacing of the larger of the materials of which it is composed, and in one case, the space between the branch of a tree, on which one was placed, and a wall, was filled up with straw and hay. It is made of roots, small twigs, and stalks of grass, with perhaps some lichens or fern, and is covered on the inside with mud, and lined with finer parts of the other materials and grass; it is sometimes most admirably hidden in a hollow in a bank, so as almost to baffle detection. It is at times placed on the top of a fence or the summit of a wall: the same situation is occasionally resorted to from year to year. N. Rowe, Esq., of Worcester College, Oxford, writes me word of a pair of Blackbirds which built their nest in the same spot in a laurel tree that had been previously tenanted the same year by a pair of Greenfinches, who in their turn had succeeded a pair of Thrushes. The female sits for thirteen days.

The eggs are commonly five in number, sometimes four, and sometimes, though but rarely, six; they are of a dull light blue or greenish brown colour, mottled and spotted with pale reddish brown, the markings being closer at the larger end, where they sometimes form an obscure ring. Mr. Hewitson, in his 'Coloured Illustrations of the Eggs of British Birds,' figures one elegantly covered over at the larger end with minute reddish brown specks, and likewise, but less thickly, over the remainder—the green shewing through; and a second curiously marbled with irregular dashes and specks of reddish brown over the green colour. Another variety is similar to the last, except that the ground colour is lighter, and the spots smaller. Another, in his possession, clear spotless light blue, with the whole of the larger end suffused with reddish brown. J. B. Ellman, Esq., of Battel, relates in the 'Zoologist,' page 2180, that he had an egg in which the spots were at the smaller end.

The Rev. G. Sowden, of Stainland, near Halifax, writes me word that he has twice met with the variety of the egg which resembles that of the Thrush, namely, in being of a fine blue colour and without spots, and he has obligingly forwarded two specimens of them to me. One of the nests which contained them was on a ledge in a very high wall in a quarry. N. Rowe, Esq. tells me that he has taken similar ones of an uniform dull blue. Some of the eggs are much larger than others, and they also vary much in colour and in markings, as also in shape, some being much more round, and others much more oval, than others: in some instances the smaller end is rounded and obtuse. Archibald Hepburn, Esq. found some which had two shells, the inner one of the ordinary colour and markings, and the outer one also marked as usual, but paler in hue. The first brood, for there are generally two, is hatched by the end of March, or the beginning or middle of April, and is abroad towards the end of May; the second by the middle of July. Sometimes even three may be reared, and in one instance, namely, in the year 1837, four successive broods, seventeen young in all, were reared by a single pair, on the island in the ornamental sheet of water in St. James's Park, London.

In Ireland also three broods are related by Mr. Thompson to have been reared in one year, near Cromac House; the last of which made their appearance on the 3rd. of July, and a nest with eggs was seen on the 22nd. of February. But this fecundity is not peculiar to Ireland, being outdone by the Scottish Blackbirds, 'Hibernicis ipsis Hiberniores.' The Rev. George Gordon, of Elgin, North-Britain, thus records in the 'Zoologist,' p.p. 2297-2298, the following curious instance of five successive nests having been made in a single year:—April 27th., 1848.—The young leave the first nest; built in a clump of ivy on the top of a wall; four in number, one egg having been abstracted from the nest before incubation. April 29th.—Two eggs in the second nest, detected in a yew tree. May 16th.—The cock bird observed feeding the five young, newly hatched, on the second nest. May 24th.—The hen Blackbird seen making her third nest in an apple tree nailed to a wall. May 29th.—Two eggs in the third nest, and the brood leave the second nest and perch on the trees. June 10th.—The third nest forsaken; of the eggs, which were five in number, two remain in the nest, part of the others on the ground below the nest, and part of them found on a wall some twenty yards from it. June 14th.—The Blackbird's fourth nest begun in a birch hedge. June 23rd.—Of the five eggs laid in the fourth nest only two remain; another found on the ground below it: it seems to have been pillaged by some bird in the same way as the third nest. June 26th. —Fifth and last nest of the Blackbird partially formed in a vine trained at the end of the house.

Thus, he adds, a single pair of birds had twenty-five eggs, and reared fourteen young in one season; and he adds that the garden and the shrubbery were so small in extent, that had there been more than one pair, they would have at once been detected; and that such were frequently looked for, but in vain; as also that the dates of the different stages observed, tend to shew that one pair may have constructed and managed the whole nests with their contents: eggs being never found in more than one nest at the same time, unless when one had been forsaken.

The following, if possible still more singular circumstance, is related in the same magazine, page 352, by Mr. M. Saul, of Garstang, Lancashire:—'Last year a male Blackbird resided in my orchard, and, as it appeared, failed in finding a mate. As early as February he began building a nest under some long leaves by the side of a fenny place in the orchard, having first scratched away a little earth, in order to make a level place for the nest to stand on. When the nest was finished, it was completely concealed from the sight and protected from rain, by the long leaves bending over it; so close was one of the leaves, that the bird had to lift it up every time he went in or out—a feat I frequently watched him perform. About two weeks after this nest was completely finished, the same bird built a second in another part of the orchard; and in this second nest I often saw him sitting later in the season; and when the leaves were on the trees he built a nest in a thorn bush. During the time he was engaged with these three nests, he would frequently perch on one of the highest trees in the orchard, and send forth his rich and melodious song, as if to invite a partner to join in his family cares, but always without success.'

Mr. Weir, the valuable correspondent of Mr. Macgillivray, relates a curious instance of a male Blackbird and a female Thrush, which being fed together about the conclusion of the winter of the year 1836, within a short distance of the house of Mr. Russell, of Moss-side, in Scotland, kept company with each other in the spring, and eventually hatched four young ones. J. R. Wise, Esq., of Lincoln College, Oxford, has forwarded to me a specimen of an hybrid egg of a like origin. Mr. Allis, in his 'Catalogue of the Birds of Yorkshire,' mentions a similar instance in the case of a pair in confinement.

The Blackbird is neat in form, and its plumage compact. Male; weight, about four ounces; length, ten inches and three quarters; bill, bright orange, as also are the eyelids and the mouth, the colour paler in the winter; iris, dark brown. The head, crown, neck, nape, chin, throat, breast, and back, are all deep black. The wings, when closed, extend one third down the tail; they expand to the width of one foot four inches; the primaries are dark brown until the second moult; the first quill feather is extremely short and narrow, the second a little shorter than the third, the third nearly as long as the fourth, which is the longest in the wing, and the fifth scarcely shorter. The tail is black, rather long, and slightly rounded; legs, dusky brown; the toes also dusky brown; the second and fourth are of nearly equal length, the first longer, the third a good deal longer, and attached to the fourth as far as the second joint; legs, dusky brown; claws, dusky brown: they are long, and slightly grooved on the sides.

Female; length, ten inches; the bill, generally dark brown, paler towards the edges, never becomes yellow for more than two thirds of its length, unless it may be in very aged birds; in some it is much darker than in others, being almost entirely black; iris, dark brown; the edges of the eyelids are greenish orange. The forehead is paler than the other parts; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, blackish brown; the neck is also paler on the sides; chin and throat, brownish white, and the neck in front dull light reddish or fulvous brown, with obscure dusky triangular-shaped spots. The breast varies much in different individuals; in some the colours are much blended together, and in others it is pale, more or less distinctly spotted with dark brown; back, blackish brown.

The wings extend to the width of one foot three inches; primaries, deep blackish brown. Tail, brownish black, the outer webs of the feathers edged with brown; upper tail coverts, darker than the rest of the back. Toes, dusky brown; claws, darker.

In the young the bill is reddish grey; the corners of the mouth and the eyelids, dull orange; the upper parts are blackish brown, each feather having a central spot or streak of pale rufous; the under parts are light rufous brown, the feathers tipped with dark spots. The full adult plumage is not acquired until after the second autumnal moult. The young female is not so dark as the male, and the dark spots are less distinct.

In the adult male the lower parts are sometimes tinged with grey or brown, and the margins of the quills brown. In the adult female the upper parts are sometimes of a lighter brown, the forehead tinged with rust-colour, and the neck in front brownish red, spotted as usual, namely, in some faint degree, as the Thrushes.

Varieties more or less pied with white are not of very unfrequent occurrence. Mr. Jesse, in his 'Gleanings in Natural History,' mentions a pair of white ones in the grounds of a nobleman at Blackheath, near London, whose brood were also white, so that it could not in their case have been an accidental circumstance. Some are cream-coloured. In one the top of the head and the breast and wings were black, the rest white. One in the Zoological Gardens, London, white, with reddish bill and eyelids. One with a white head. One white, with black feathers interspersed; the quills and tail, black, except two feathers of the latter and one of the former; the bill, pale yellow; the feet, dusky, curiously variegated with pale yellow. One with the lower parts variegated with grey and greyish brown feathers. One patched with white, some of the quills being also of that colour. One with the head white, and also the neck, the latter divided by a black band, with a few white feathers interspersed, and one or two more on the shoulder. Another with the nape of the neck white, shading off with the same colour towards the head. One, a female, white, with a few brown feathers on the shoulders. One silvery white all over. The late William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, describes one which had a white head, and the whole of the upper plumage black, like a male, while the under plumage was that of a female, a specimen, in the language of the Pigeon-fanciers, of a 'Hooded Nun.' One had the quill feathers white and the wing coverts black.

One of these birds, which had been kept by the Rev. J. Pemberton Bartlett from the nest, became white on both wings in its sixth year, the following year's moult restoring it to its original plumage; another was noticed by Mr. Bix, near Norwich, which had at first shewed one 'white feather' in its tail, and the next year it had two or three, and the head, neck, and back much speckled with similar ones. One, a female, of a complete cream-colour, with yellow bill and legs, was shot by Mr. George Johnson, of Melton Ross, near Brigg, Lincolnshire.

# RING OUZEL.

ROCK OUZEL. RING THRUSH. MOUNTAIN BLACKBIRD.
MOOR BLACKBIRD.

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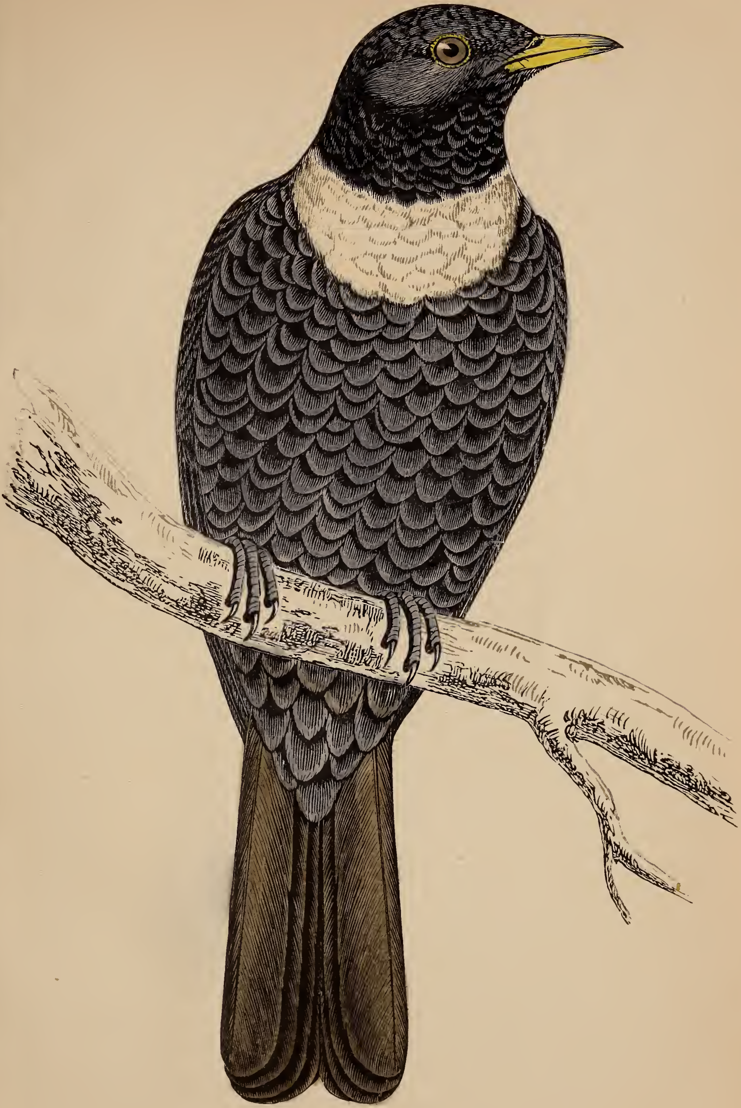
|---|---|
| *Turdus torquatus,* | PENNANT. MONTAGU. |
| *Merula torquata,* | SELBY. GOULD. |

*Turdus*—A Thrush *Torquatus*—Ringed.

THIS is a bird of the mountain, found almost exclusively in the wild and uncultivated districts of the country.

In Europe its range extends northwards as far as Norway and Sweden; and southwards to Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, Spain, and Holland. In the latter it is rare, which is not to be wondered at, considering how unsuited that country must be to its predilections. In Africa it is also found along the northern shores; and in Asia, in Syria.

In Yorkshire it is common enough on high moor lands, though generally seen only in pairs on the side of some solitary glen or wild ravine, and is sometimes met with in the more cultivated parts. Mr. R. Leyland on one occasion saw a flock of upwards of twenty feeding on the berries of the mountain ash, in a garden near Halifax, in the month of September. It is also plentiful on the moors near Sheffield, and has been known to build on Thorne Moor—a wild tract, where I formerly took some rare insects, but cultivation is gradually encroaching upon it, and in time the record of it will alone remain. My friend Arthur Strickland, Esq., has once or twice met with considerable flights in turnip fields, but apparently consisting, for the most part, of birds of the year, and probably collected together for emigration. Graves records it in his 'Catalogue of the Birds of Cleveland.' One or two have been seen in different years in the neighbourhood of Sowerby and Thirsk, as Edward D. Swarbreck, Esq., of the latter place, has informed



RING OUZEL.

me. I have myself seen one or two in the parish of East Garston, near Lamborne, Berkshire, one of which was shot by my fellow pupil, and afterwards fellow collegian, the late Rev. Henry Boys. The Rev. R. P. Alington has known but two in his part of Lincolnshire, one shot by his brother, and the other, a female in full plumage, by himself several years ago.

W. F. W. Bird, Esq. writes in the 'Zoologist,' page 2495, 'A male Ring Ouzel was killed at Kidderminster, on the 9th. of May last, (1849.) Two others, supposed to be nesting, were seen a short time previous, at Witley, in the same county, and one of them (the male,) was shot.' In Warwickshire, too, the adjoining county, Mr. A. Evans, of Coventry, records in the 'Zoologist,' pages 2142-3, that the nest and eggs of this bird were obtained at Pinley, close to that city, on the 25th. of April, 1848, the only instance that was known to have occurred there. In the neighbouring county of Leicester the nests have also occurred in different years; one in the Rookery at Bosworth Park, where five others were obtained in 1848. In Norfolk it has been known to breed in one or two instances.

This species is generally considered to be of recluse habits, but the Rev. R. W. W. Cobbold, of Thelveton Rectory, in Suffolk, has written me word of a pair which built their nest in a low Portugal laurel bush, only three feet from the ground, and close to where people were continually passing, in the grounds of the Manor House of Wortham, Suffolk. John Longe, Esq., of Coddenham Vicarage, near Needham, in the same county, has also informed me of one, the first he ever heard of in that part, which he shot there the beginning of September, 1852: it was feeding with some Blackbirds on a mulberry tree.

It breeds on the moors in the northern parts of 'Famous Derbyshire,' as, for instance, in Dovedale and near Buxton, the land of 'Peveril of the Peak,' and on Dartmoor, in Devonshire, as also in Cumberland, Northumberland, Westmoreland, and Durham. In other counties it is observed in spring and autumn, for eight or ten days, while on its migration, in Dorsetshire, Hampshire, Kent, Surrey, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cornwall, and Sussex. One was caught in a trap in a garden at Lambeth, in London; another was shot out of a small flock on Wimbledon Common; and one near Saffron Walden, in Essex, in the month of August, 1836.

In Scotland, the Rev, G. Gordon records that it is a regular summer visitor in Morayshire, but is only seen sparingly dispersed over the range of hills immediately above the cultivated districts, where it remains and breeds. So it also does in Selkirkshire, Sutherlandshire, Argyleshire, and Edinburghshire; in the latter on the Lammermuir and the Pentland Hills. In Banffshire, Mr. Thomas Edwards records them as occurring on the hills of Tillieminet, Kirkney, Noth, and Clashnadarrow.

It is also plentiful on the mountains in Wales, and its loud song suddenly breaking out here and there on the untrodden wild, is a gladsome sound to the wanderer, whom it cheers as he journeys on his lonely way.

In Orkney it is an occasional winter visitant; small flocks were observed at Elsness in April, 1822, and again on the 12th. of April, 1829. Three were shot in Sanday, October 14th., 1835: they were numerous in that island during October, 1836. It has been also seen in Orphir, and on one occasion has been known to breed in the Hebrides, and also in the Isle of Skye.

In Ireland, the late William Thompson, Esq., of Belfast, records it as frequenting suitable localities throughout the island; the mountains of the counties of Dublin and Wicklow, and the high rocky hills of Clare, the Glens, Glenariff, and about Cushendall, in Antrim; Rosheen Mountain and Lough Salt, in Donegal; Slieve Donard, the loftiest of the mountains of Mourne, in Down, and the mountains to its north-west, and those above Tollymore Park, the seat of Lord Roden; Achill Head—one of the most westerly points of Mayo; the heights of the Carlingford Mountain, in Louth; the hills about Portumna, on the western border of Galway; Slieve-na-mon, and about Clonmel, in the county of Tipperary; the Comeragh Mountains in Waterford, the least frequented parts of the mountains of Connemara, the mountainous districts of the county of Cork, the Mounterlowney Mountains, in the county of Tyrone, and the most rocky parts of those of Kerry.

The Ring Ouzel arrives in this country in the end of March or beginning of April, and departs in October.

It is capable of being kept in confinement, and will live from six to ten years: it is found in its wild state perching on stones, from whence it utters its brief song. Like many other birds that build on the ground, it is very clamorous if any one approaches the nest, and endeavours to decoy the intruder away by well-feigned and real symptoms of distress. It is of a very shy nature, and if disturbed, which it easily is even from a covert, rises up to a considerable height, and often flies as much as half a mile before it alights.

The Ring Ouzel is rather rapid in its flight, which is very little undulated, and if sojourning in districts where there are hedgerows, seems to have a habit, at least when disturbed, of flying in and out in half circles in its progress along a hedge, or the side of a wood.

It feeds on insects, worms, and snails, and likewise on different fruits and seeds—those of the mountain ash, the bilberry, the juniper, the rowan, and the holly. When the young ones are fledged, they frequently descend to the gardens nearest to their native wilds, where they do considerable damage among cherries, raspberries, currants, plums, and gooseberries, and, where there are any, among grapes and various wall fruits.

Its song is desultory but sweet—a few plaintive notes uttered in a clear and warbling whistle. Its alarm is signified by a strong cry, resembling that of the Blackbird. Meyer says that its ordinary note resembles the syllable 'tuk.'

The nest is placed among the heather upon a ledge or in some hollow of the grey and hoary rock, whose weather-beaten front tells of many a cold and wintry blast, that has swept, age after age, over the wild and desolate moor or the barren mountain side. It is hidden more or less by a tuft of heath, the root of a tree, or a projection of the rock in which it is placed: those found in the more southerly counties were placed at a height of about five or six feet from the ground, in such a situation as a yew tree, or ivy-clad elm. It measures about seven inches in diameter, about three inches and a half in depth on the outside, and about two inches inside. It is composed of dried grasses, heather, stems, or stalks, thickly matted together, with here and there an occasional leaf: on the inside it is lined, according to some with mud, within which again is another lining of similar materials to those of which the outside is compacted.

The eggs are pale greenish blue, sparingly freckled with pale purple and reddish brown markings, except at the larger end, where those obscurations are confluent, and entirely conceal the ground colour. They vary in the depth of the markings, some being much lighter, and some much darker than others. One has been noticed by Mr. A. Evans of a uniform chesnut colour at the large end, the remainder being nearly pure blue. They are four or five in number, sometimes, it is said, six. Mr. Heysham, of Carlisle, reports the young birds, as fully fledged by the 15th. of June, and Mr. Macgillivray has known them on the 7th.

Male; length, about eleven inches and a half to twelve inches; bill, which is strong and notched near the tip, is more or less yellow and blackish brown, the former at the base: its upper surface is a gentle curve. Iris, dark brown, the eyelids yellow; black bristly feathers surround the base of the bill, and there is a row along the base of the upper one. Head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, uniform brownish black, the feathers edged with blackish grey; chin, throat, and breast, also uniform brownish black, the feathers edged with blackish grey, and the latter-named with an elegant half-moon-shaped bar of white across its upper part, the horns pointing upwards. Back, the same uniform brownish black, the feathers similarly edged with grey.

The wings, which are short, expand to the width of one foot seven inches, and reach to near the middle of the tail, have the first feather very short and very narrow, the second equal in length to the fifth, the third and fourth nearly equal, but the third the longest; underneath, the wings are paler than above. Greater wing coverts, blackish brown, the feathers deeply tipped with grey, and tinged with the same on their outer webs; primaries and secondaries, brownish black, but not so dark as the rest of the plumage, and edged with grey on the outer margins; tertiaries, the same, more broadly edged with grey on the outer margins—the outer webs tinged with the same; greater and lesser under wing coverts, pale grey, mixed with brownish ash-colour. Tail, brownish black, the outer feather narrowly edged with pale ash-colour; underneath it is dark grey; upper tail coverts, brownish black; under tail coverts, the same—the shafts white. Legs and toes, dark greenish brown; underneath, yellowish: the outer one is closely united to the middle one. Claws, brownish black: they are compressed laterally, and are very blunt.

The pale edgings to the feathers wear off in the winter, so that the bird is more uniformly black in the spring.

The female is rather lighter and duller-coloured than the male, and the grey margins of the feathers are wider. Length, ten inches and a half; bill, brownish yellow, the base of the upper one dusky; iris, brown. Head, crown, neck, and nape, dark chocolate brown. The chin, throat, and breast have the feathers edged with white. The band across the breast is narrower, and its colour less pure, and clouded with reddish brown and grey; the tips of the feathers are pale brown in a crescent shape; back, dark chocolate brown. The wings, which extend to the width of a foot and a half, have the quill feathers margined with brownish grey. The under tail coverts have a white line along the middle of the feathers.

The young male resembles the adult female, but in the young female the band across the breast is scarcely discernible. The upper parts of the plumage have the edges of the feathers brownish or olive grey, those on the shoulders with a clear streak along the shaft of yellowish white, and the quills more deeply margined with grey. Bill, deep brown, orange at the corner; head, crown, neck on the back, and nape, brownish black, the feathers tipped with black and edged with dark reddish yellow; the neck in front is yellowish white on the middle; chin, white. The throat is yellowish white, sparingly marked with brownish black, which latter colour trenches on the former as the bird advances in age. The breast has every feather varied with alternate bars of yellowish white and blackish olive brown, which gives it a mottled appearance; the crescent is brownish white, each feather with a crescent-shaped dusky line near the tip. Back, brownish black, the feathers tipped with black, and edged with dark reddish yellow. Greater wing coverts, edged with pale yellowish grey; lesser wing coverts, with a central streak of yellowish; primaries, secondaries, and tertiaries, dark olive brown, edged with yellowish white or grey. The tail has the outer feathers edged with pale grey, with which all the feathers are tipped; under tail coverts, with a longitudinal white spot along the shaft, and their tips yellowish. Toes and claws, pale brown.

White varieties are said to have occurred, and specimens with white feathers about the head have been occasionally met with.

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